MIDWEST METAL

Issue # 26
Summer / Fall 2003

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"Against All Opposition-Crushing All Limitations-Pure Strength Through Solitude-Discipline And Determination"

Welcome to **Midwest Metal Issue #26**. If you've been keeping track, November of 2002 was roughly 10 years since I started doing this thing and while I don't believe in the self stroking "anniversary issue" bullshit, if I did this would be it, and it would make sense as I feel this is one of our best issues yet! I'd like to thank those who keep in contact with me via **midwestmetalmagazine.com**. We're finally getting around to updating people on a monthly basis and adding one new web only interview per month and always getting new photos up as well. Of course none of which would be possible without the help of Webmaster Ali Jaffray. I want to thank Ali for his help and continued dedication. You're holding Issue #26 and I've decided to make a few changes within and tried to put more emphasis on the interviews themselves with some of them a little longer in length and less on the reviews. The issue release schedule for us is sporadic at best and there's just so many records coming out that are so average, so mundane and really just time wasters. I have to say I was a little more than unmotivated at times to listen to a lot of these albums. Speaking of reviews, you'll also notice the bands interviewed in this issue do not have record reviews for their new albums, why? Well for a number of reasons really. One is we liked your new albums enough to interview the band so obviously you're doing something right. Secondly we lost some reviews due to incompetent "wanna be" reviewers. Long story short, two guys whom were sent CD's to review and both fucking flaked! But content wise I'm satisfied with the bands we have in here and I like the variety too. Essentially I think I've achieved my goal of producing a magazine I'd like to read myself and that's been the thing since day one. I'd like to thank those who advertised with us and helped make this a reality thank you all! You are key factors in our survival and I cannot thank you enough. To those who think I'm fucking around or that I'll continue to review your shitty releases and interview your bands with no means of support, good luck. Chicago is a major Metal market and while I may not be "big time" there's not many mags around that cover this stuff. So unless you want a world of webzines and shitty message boards support print zines by advertising and **KEEP METAL ON PAPER!** Enjoy reading this, drop a line if you have anything to say and we'll be glad to discuss. Thanks to Family, friends, bands. Extra special thanks to AMT for her never ending support, patience and belief. And finally, to **Max** for being the most powerful force in my life, you're the reason I breathe.

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News, Rumors, Facts Etc.

Dismember are currently working on their latest album 'Where Iron Crosses Grow' which is set for a September release through Hammerheart Records.

MACABRE Update

Watch for 'Murder Metal: Sinister Slaughter II' coming in Fall 2003. Produced by Neil Kernon at Engine Studios, the new album is part of Macabre's Trilogy Of Terror which includes the re-issue of 'Grim Reality' and the official debut of The Macabre Minstrels. All titles will be released on Season Of Mist Records.

Destruction return to action with 'Metal Discharge' in late Sept via Nuclear Blast

Zyklon have announced 'Aeon' as the title of their forthcoming album due this September from Candlelight.

Hatebreed are currently recording the follow up to 'Perseverance' at Planet Z studios with Producer Zeuss. Watch for the new album in September through Stillborn/Universal.

Place Of Skulls have named their upcoming album 'With Vision' the first to feature Ex-Spirit Caravan guitarist/vocalist **Wino** watch for it in early July on Southern Lord.

Michigan's **Repulsion** will be playing this year's Milwaukee Metalfest!

Nasum have completed work on their new album titled 'Helvete'. The album features guest appearances by Shane Embury of **Napalm Death** and Jorgen from **Entombed** sees the light of day through Relapse this spring.

Speaking of **Entombed**, their new album titled 'Inferno' comes out in Europe on May 13th. A US release has yet to be announced.

Billy Milano the ever outspoken **MOD/SOD** front man launched his official website in May. Check it out at **www.billymilano.com**

Iced Earth release their SPV debut 'Glorious Burden' in September.

In Aeternum's new LP, 'Nuclear Armageddon' is out through Monochrome Music and Poland's Agonia Records

Florida's **Brutality** have reformed and will have a four-song EP out later in the year through an as-yet-undetermined label.

Metal DVD

Krisiun's upcoming DVD, 'Live Armagedon', is out in the spring. Featuring a live performance filmed late last year at a TV studio in Poland. Also will include footage from Japan, U.S.A. and Brazil.

Iron Maiden's new double DVD comes out on June2. Entitled 'Visions Of The Beast' it's over 240 minutes of Maiden, all their videos plus interviews etc. etc..

Deceased's 'Digital Graveyard' is a DVD full of videos, live performances, interviews, commentary and more will be released through Malt Soda Records.

www.maltsoda.com

'Live Kreation (Revisioned Glory)' is the title of the first ever DVD by **Kreator**, will be released on July 1.

Dio's 'Dio's Evil or Divine' is a live performance recorded in NYC will be out June 17.

Danzig's 'Archive De La Morte' is a collection of uncensored videos and live material is out now.

Cryptic Slaughter will have their first two albums 'Convicted' and 'Money Talks' reissued by **Relapse Records** on June 17. Both will include bonus tracks.

Six Feet Under have entered Morrisound Studios in Tampa, Florida to record 'Bringer Of Blood' which is due out later in the year.

Alabama Thunderpussy have parted ways with longtime singer Johnny Throckmorton the search for a replacement is under way.

Nuclear Assault's 'Alive Again' Live LP hits July 1.

Bonded by the Bay

Exodus have named their upcoming album 'Tempo Of The Damned'. The album will be recorded in June and should see the light of day towards the end of the year.

Congrats to ex **Violence/Technocracy** Guitarist **Phil Demmel**. Demmel was named **Machine Head**'s new guitarist in April and will enter the studio later this year for his first studio album with the band.

The fully reunited **Death Angel** have begun writing a new album! The band, who recently completed a European festival tour with **Nuclear Assault**, **Malevolent Creation**, **Marduk** and more look to sign a new deal and release the album late '03 or early 2004.

Iron Maiden, **Dio** and **Motorhead** will be touring towards the end of the Summer, incredible package only to be ruined by Anthrax (a.k.a. Iron Maiden's bitches) as possible support.

Dio will be joined by **Ratt** guitarist **Warren DiMartini** for the tour.

Krisiun return with 'Works of Carnage' in late summer through Century Media.

Deceased the first band signed to Relapse Records has decided to part ways with the label.

Sepultura will have their new album 'Roorback' out in June.

Life Of Agony who's January reunion shows were recorded for a double live CD and DVD, titled 'River Runs Again 2003', SPV will release it on August 12th. Check the bands official site **www.lifeofagony.com** for further updates and merchandise.

Murder Squad, the Autopsy inspired side band of Entombed and Dismember members have released their second album 'Ravenous, Murderous' in Europe on Threeman Records. A US release should be sorted out by the time this goes to print. The album features a guest appearance by Chris Reifert.

Be on the lookout for a 16-CD **Alice Cooper** box set containing all Alice's official Warner Bros. albums later this year. All the discs will be re-mastered with bonus tracks and with extended packaging with rare photos and new liner notes.

Force Of Evil is the name of the new band featuring guitarist's Michael Denner (ex-**Mercyful Fate**) and Hank Shermann (MF) with (**King Diamond**) bassist Hal Patino and (MF) drummer Bjarne Holm and vocalist Martin Steene of **Ironfire**.

Chicago's **Disinter** will disband in December 2003. Guitarist Mike LeGros has joined **November's Doom** as a permanent member on Bass.

High On Fire return to Chicago on **July 4th** @ the **Double Door**.

Grip Inc. will enter Woodhouse Studio this summer to record the follow-up to 1999's 'Solidify', due in early 2004.

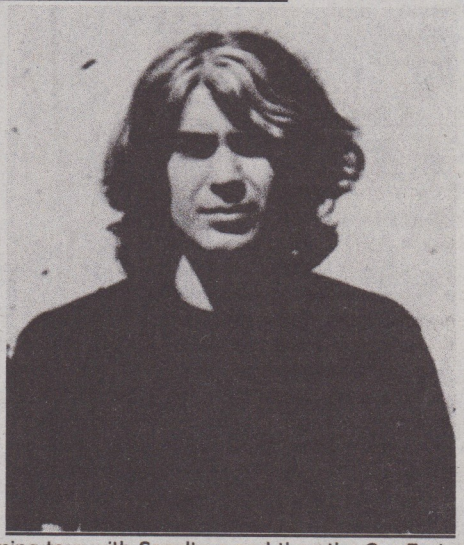
Ramesses is the new band featuring former **Electric Wizard** members Mark Greening and Tim Bagshaw. Watch for their 10 song debut sometime this Fall, rounding out the line up is ex-Spirmyard bassist Adam Richardson.

MIDWEST METAL'S TOP SHIT

Skinless: From Sacrifice to...
Sworn Enemy: Live
Cathedral: The VIIth Coming
Darkthrone: Hate Them
1349: Liberation
Fleshtized: Here Among...
Hatebreed: Perseverance
Old Man's Child:In Defiance..
Obeisance: Lucifer Master
Grave: Back From The Grave
Daemonicide:2003 Demo
Woods Of Ypres: Against...
Nocturnal Fear: Sterilize...
Vital Remains:Dechristianize
Napalm Death: Order of the..
midwestmetalmagazine.com

Picking The Brain

VoiVod Drummer/Visionary Away is another one of those been there/done that type of people. From the band's earliest days in Canada revolutionizing the marriage of Thrash, Punk and Progressive Metal, **VoiVod** have blazed a path all their own! Not only was the music some of the most original ever to be released but their ideology and concept gave the band a three dimensional twist few in history have possessed. After some up's and downs in the later part of the 90's the band has returned stronger than ever with the release of their 13th album, the aptly self-titled 'VoiVod'. For the first time in a long time the ears and eyes of the music world are looking to the band, maybe to remind each of us the true meaning of perseverance? Regardless, a true legend's brain has been picked below, enjoy. Visit **www.voivod.com** for the latest on the band.



FOOD

If I'm at home it's definitely vegetarian food. When I'm home my girlfriend cooks and I do the dishes, which is the deal we have and it's a good deal because she's a great cook! She's the one who got me into vegetarian food as she's one herself. On the road it gets a little more difficult so I am less picky. But less picky or not I won't eat hamburgers, really I'm afraid of madcow disease and things like that. So I will go vegetarian as much as possible.

DRINK

I don't drink like I used to, especially when I was on tour back then. I'm 39 years old and am still playing Thrash Metal so I try not to party as much as I used to, but if I'm going to have any drinks I'll have a few White Russians, which are kind of like kid's drinks (laughs) I mean they taste like Quik (laughs)! So other than the occasional alcohol here and there I mostly just drink water or juice.

DRUGS

Only Pot. My chemical career is, well it's pretty much over (laughs)! I'll tell you this, after all these years I still feel some of it every now and again. Unfortunately Piggy, Snake, Blacky (original Bassist-ed.) and I had our summers of acid when we were teenagers. So I don't know what kind of damage it did to my brain...**But it sure made you write some fucked up music!!** Oh yeah, that and some really fucked up drawings that's a definite. But nowadays we're all bud dudes (laughing)!

MUSIC

Definitely Psychedelic music is my preference. And fortunately for me there is some really good Psychedelic music being done these days like Apples in Stereo and this band called Of Montreal. They're simply amazing! There are a whole bunch of bands doing stuff like 'Pet Sounds' and The White Album' and that type of music and that's the stuff that I really, really like. If I'm going to listen to something heavy I'll listen to International Noise Conspiracy or even something like The Hives. And after all these years I'm still a fan of Punk Rock. I went record shopping here in San Francisco recently and bought a new album by Discharge which was recorded by the original line up and it is absolutely fantastic! **Are you still a vinyl guy?** I still have all my vinyl's and my turntable, but I buy CD's now, the vinyl takes up so much space of my apartment! **Do you download?** Yes. But my policy is I go to the band's official site to check what they have available to listen to. I do not do the file sharing thing, if I like what I hear I buy the album, which is how I found out about Of Montreal.

SEX

I have been with my girlfriend for quite some time. She's a DJ in Montreal and since we've been together we (**VoiVod**) haven't been touring as much as we did in the past. So this upcoming tour with Sepultura and then the Ozz Fest will be the true test drive (laughs)! I think we'll be going out for four or five months this year and that's quite a long time. That's definitely a long time to be away from each other! So I guess the only sex fantasy I'll get to have while on the road will have to be Seven of Nine from Star Trek...now that's a babe (laughing)! **What was the longest tour you've been on?** I would say the VoiVod/Soundgarden/Faith No More tour [in support of the 'Nothingface' LP-ed.] in 1990, maybe three months straight with over 90 shows played. In 1996 we toured with Pro-Pain in Europe and that was a very hard tour, one of the hardest we'd ever been on.

LOVE

It is something I believe in and in a way all of us are Hippie Metal Dudes (laughs)! Ever since the beginning of our career we've been vocal against nuclear war mainly, and it's still our top concern. So the outlet for this frustration has been our heavy music, we do not promote violence...I know it may sound cheesy to some but we tend to appreciate love more than hate...

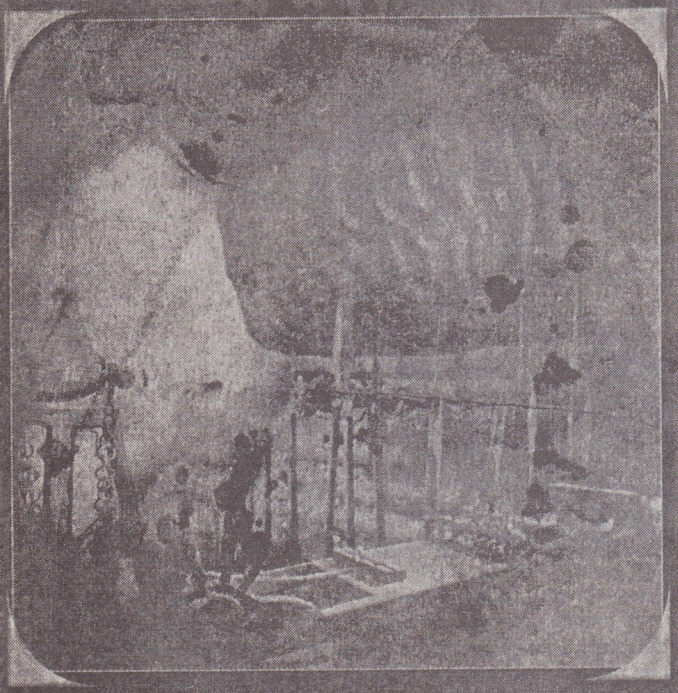
HATE

Hate can be a good outlet if you're really pissed off you can go let it out in a song. But I am really against bullshitters, you know people who are racist, sexist and everything involved with hate. Bottom line, I don't like hate!

WORK

Well I've been doing a lot of computer graphics for different projects over the past year. A lot of the past few years have seen me do what I can do to survive, though I prefer to work on my music. But starting in January of 2003 we are able to live off the music again so we concentrate on **VoiVod** 24 hours a day! Mostly we owe this to Jason, he's a very shrewd businessman as well as very disciplined and his work ethic is like nothing I've ever seen. He's a good example to follow, for sure. **Congrats man, that is good to hear! Looking back, what were some of the jobs you did before music took over?** Well we started as teenagers so we ended up skipping school to go directly on the road so we never knew anything else. When we had the crash in Germany in 1998 and everything went downhill, it was quite the grueling experience to go to work. I will say I was the lucky one by working with my computer art skills, but the other guys weren't as lucky as their work had nothing to do with art, so I know that must have been very hard for Snake and Piggy.

Hell shall be unleashed...



KULT OV AZAZEL
Oculus Infernum

Summoned forth from the dark and endless depths of hatred and fire, Kult ov Azazel have returned to unleash their opus: "Oculus Infernum". Eight blackened, hellish anthems of merciless, unrelenting lividity combined with the power of infernal majesty lay within, inspired by screams of terrible anguish and the sick torturous instruments that create them.
Prepare, mortals, to gaze into the Eye of Hell...

Malevolent Creation
"The Will to Kill"

The new 11 song barrage by these veterans of Death Metal is now unleashed. Featuring new vocalist Kyle Symons of Hateplow - this is the most vicious, violent and menacing Malevolent Creation release to date!
Distributed in Europe by Nuclear Blast

Eternal Lies
"Spiritual Deception"

Eternal Lies takes melodic Death Metal to it's edge. "Spiritual Deception" attacks with ten cold, epic and versitile anthems. Featuring members of Anata, Eucharist and Fatal Embrace!

Immersed in Blood
"Killing Season"

Finally.. something so gut wrenching, disturbing, ugly, sick, and just down right brutal emerges within the scene. "Killing Season" is one unrelenting beast of U.S. inspired death-grind sure to mop the bloody floor with all in it's path. Brutal metal, offensive lyrics and perverse artwork...
The Killing Season has now begun!

Closer Than Kin
"The Machineries of Breath"

Stark, harsh and brutal hardcore from Mass. CD features a multimedia video for the single "Dead Flowers for a Dying Lover" playable on PC and Mac.
On tour in Europe with Today is the Day..
Check out www.CTK508.com *for details!*

COMING SOON:

Colour Trip - "Penetration" - The intense and insane return of these Hardcore/Thrash hybrid maniacs
Denata - "Art of the Insane" - Sick and twisted old school Swedish deathtrash
Super Natural - "Hollosonic" - Italy's Doom/Psychadelic masters debut full length.
Be on the lookout for rereleases from Kult ov Azazel, Hateplow,
and a Malevolent Creation's live DVD.

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Amongst the Swarm

The feeling I get while listening to Amongst The Swarm's EP 'Crowning The Defeated' is the feeling of invincibility. One of the things that drew me to the Indianapolis quartet was their sheer will to deliver bone crunching MetalCore with nothing but pure heart, whether it's blasting away or slowing it down to a Winter-ish halt A.T.S. do it all . No scene alliances, no political overtones, no over thought decisions, just a release of venomous aggression directed at those who oppose. I spoke to Drummer Bob Fouts about the past, present and future of this cyclone of fury.

Midwest Metal: It would be tough to start speaking about A.T.S. without backing up a bit to the break up of your previous band Burn It Down. Let's begin with what happened there.

Bob Fouts: Basically Burn It Down was a very cool thing, it's the thing that got our feet wet as far as getting involved with a "professional" style band. It was a very good time but unfortunately towards the end a lot of people weren't seeing eye to eye and that's pretty much what happened. Friendships within the band started deteriorating and certain people's ideas of where the band should've went or how business should've been handled was different than others. So when you have a couple of people in really controlling seats in one band and they're seeing in opposite ways there's going to be some tension, and the tension pretty much ended in Cleveland, Ohio in November of 2000 while we on tour with In Flames, Shadows Fall and Nevermore. So there were some words said, that probably shouldn't have been said, but they came out and our singer Ryan decided to part ways with the tour. So that didn't really leave us with too many options but to disband and to come home.

What happened when you got home?

Personally I took it all very hard and it was a long time before I even thought about doing music or getting into another band. So aside from a few little projects I didn't do much musically until I was approached by Bob (Easley-G) and Ryan (Green-G) from **Amongst The Swarm**. These guys were mutual friends that I knew from local shows and they came to the place I was working at and asked me to come by their place to check out what they were doing, so on a whim I did and I really liked it and we've been doing our thing since then.

So when Ryan and Bobby approached you, what was it that got you going again musically?

Just going over there and hanging out with them. I'd come from a situation where I was in a band for four years that did quite a bit of touring and got further than we ever thought we would and it could sometimes jade you. So with these guys everything was fresh, new, they were stoked to be paying and it brought the fun aspect back to going out there and playing brutal music again and I want to keep it that way instead of all the business bullshit.

How long before you three start clicking musically? You've also had a few line up changes along the way, right?

Musically it was pretty much right away, it's funny as we just found a bunch of old four track tapes from the summer we formed and listening to all the people we'd tried out vocally. Out of the blue an old friend of ours named Deejay who used to sing for a Death Metal band called Blockhead happened to pop up so that's how we found him. Jason, ex-Burn It Down bassist was in the band for maybe the first four months and right around February 2002 Brian Grimes who played in a Death Metal band called Upheaval on Willowtip Records came on board and we've been this unit since then.

I'm always interested in how the songwriting goes, how does a song get written in A.T.S.?

Believe it or not this is the first band I've ever been in where I've written complete songs on my own. I've always been involved with the arranging or coming up with parts with the whole band, but on 'Crowning The Defeated' I was able to write songs at home on my guitar and then show them to the band, but since then it's become more of a combined effort. But it's been cool as the songs they had that got me interested also got me motivated so that's been cool. But we're a band that works best when we have a goal, if we have studio time booked or something we just get down to business.

Where did the title 'Crowning The Defeated' come from?

Our Guitarist Bobby came up with it, he's an ex jarhead really interested in war and one night we were drinking at the house and he just said the title and everyone agreed! Simple huh? But it could taken a few ways and that's up to the listener.

How far along are you guys with the full length?

Right now we've got about 60% of the album written and we've just been trying to secure a new deal to get it out, so we'll see what happens with all that.

How would you describe the band to someone who's never heard A.T.S.?

Just a band formed by Metal fans, and we're not talking about a band where the first Metal record we heard was Firestorm by Earth Crisis. We all grew up on Maiden, Slayer and all the early 90's Death Metal all the late 80's early 90's crossover like D.R.I. and Cryptic Slaughter etc. So nothing we do is forced, we're not out to reinvent the wheel we're out to play brutal music and have a good time. I always knew if I was to play in another band it'd be more of a straight forward Metal band, yeah Burn It Down had singing parts, but the scene became so saturated with those bands I just wanted something different. There's a few bands out there doing it well like Premonitions of War from Toledo, Ohio that's a band I think we're on the level with, just don't over analyze the music and become artsy for the sake of it! We know what we want to do in the band and I'd say we're pretty stubborn about it we're not out to become a critics band or shit like that, if people like what we do, cool. If not, we don't really give a fuck!

www.amongsttheswarm.com

Pagan War Machine

Welcome to the Machine

Pagan War Machine is a Vicious Thrash/Death band from the Los Angeles area featuring current and ex-members of Dark Angel, Abattoir, Dreams Of Damnation and more. Their first output is a self-titled four song demo that screams of pure Metal with plenty of classic as well as modern moments throughout. This is an interview with Vocalist/Bassist Steve Gaines on what's going on with one of the top bands in the underground.

Midwest Metal: Please introduce yourselves to Chicago and the World and how Pagan War Machine came to be.

Steve Gaines: **Pagan War Machine** started almost by accident. Jim [Durkin] invited Abattoir over to his home for a birthday party for Loana Valencia (Dreams Of Damnation Vocalist) and Marcelo Lima, who eventually became a member of PWM. So we had a big jam session, which was awesome, and a little later, Jim was showing me his recording studio. He was playing demos of DOD songs, and then he started playing some other songs, one of which became "Swarm", and I just freaked out. I thought it was amazing. So I asked him if they were new DOD songs - he said no, that he didn't know what he wanted to do with them. So, a week later, I'm back at Jim's studio, putting bass and vocal tracks to these songs. Before you know it, we had a band.

Do you feel the expectations for PWM are high due to the fact who's in the band?

Actually, the demo got out into the underground really fast. Without any kind of planning or anything. We made a few copies, and suddenly, it was everywhere. So we never had any time or thought about how people would react. But we did believe in it, so we were willing to let it out there. The expectations - we knew they'd be high. Hopefully, we meet those expectations.

How long did it take to get the four songs that appear on the demo together? Were there more songs written with these chosen for a reason? How many songs do you currently have?

The music for those 4 songs was already there, and Jim had been sitting on those songs for a while. The lyrics came together in about a week or so, taking a couple of weeks to get on tape. No particular reason for those 4, other than they were the ones that were ready. Right now, we have about 10 songs, and as many new ideas.

If and when a record deal is inked, will the four songs that compromise Demo #1 be included on the debut?

Absolutely. And the mood that is set by those four will be the mood of a full length release.

How has the reaction been to the demo?

Kind of strange, but we haven't received a bad review yet. That seems very odd to me, but I am extremely grateful that people identify so strongly with it. People really seem to like it...and what an honor !

The band has had a chance to play a few shows, how's the reaction been. How's the scene where you're located at?

Well, we are located in L.A. So there is a very vibrant scene, but it doesn't get the publicity it deserves. All of the bands know each other, and unlike the early days of thrash everyone is supportive of one another. At this point we have only played one show, and the reaction was amazing. The crowd was SRO, and they were very loud and supportive. We are grateful.

What are the main goals of the band? How do you think PWM fits into the global scene of Extreme music?

The main goal is to keep going forward. We think we are on to something special here with **Pagan War Machine**, and we want to take this to as many people as we can. Fitting in? I hope this doesn't sound arrogant, but I don't think we care about fitting in. When you do that, you start to exist merely to please others. I have done that in other bands, and it usually is a disaster. It should always be approached as "we exist - if you like it great... if not, then oh well." A scene or genre can change dramatically overnight. Be a slave to yourself, not to another.

Any final words to close this out?

Tom, to you....thanks for taking the time to ask about **Pagan War Machine**. And for your readers, thanks for taking the time to read about us. We are aware that without your support, we are nothing. I suppose that can be linked to the answer given to the above question, I mean, it sounds contrary to the answer given, but it really is interlinked. Thanks again, Tom. Stay heavy.

www.paganwarmachine.com

Behemoth

2003 is truly the year of Metal. From the amazing albums being released to some of the strongest touring packages in some time, it's shaping up to be a great year. A band with both of the above is Poland's Behemoth. Having a new album released on a stronger label [due to the Olympic merger with Century Media] and jumping on a solid US tour is something any band hopes for, and if you're coming from another country after years of sacrifice you'll probably be more than just excited! **'Here And Beyond'** ***is the latest release from the band and like the previous albums is a technical yet brutal soundscape, but never does it tend to go overboard as it's message like the music is delivered straight to the point. I spoke to founder, guitarist Nergal roughly twenty minutes after the bands first ever Chicago performance.***

Midwest Metal: First things first, this was your first performance in Chicago. How'd it go for you?

Nergal: Yeah, good impression man! We had a few problems on stage, strings broke and a few places where we fell out of tune so it was a bit chaotic onstage, but the people, man they made up for it. The US so far, New Jersey was great, Tampa was cool, Phoenix was excellent, Seattle and Los Angeles were both just outstanding and now Chicago is up there as one of the best shows of the tour.

I personally didn't know what to expect, but the people instantly freaked out when you started, I just thought to myself, "cool, they'll be back".

The only thing I wish is it could've been like a proper show, for instance we didn't get to use our intro or stage show on this tour, but those are minor details because the people made it great.

I think being here for the first time in support of this album has to be just perfect timing as this new album is the one I enjoy the most of your work. Did you approach this album any differently than previous albums?

Well since 'Pandemonic Incantations' which is when we became, say, more technical and more Death Metal-ish in a away people started to predict the future for us. They'd say "this is your best record, there's no way you'll be able to do better" so then we came out with 'Satanica' and then we heard the same "no way to top this" you know? Next was 'Thelema 6' and while we heard it all again we also started hearing that the production cannot be topped almost like we'd been captured on tape to perfection! With this band things just happen for a bunch of totally different individuals sometimes it's a wonder we're still together but we are and we owe it to the chemistry because it's something that works. We are all so behind what we do there is no bullshit, the four of us live on stage, we just go at it and we hope it shows. You can't fool the Metal fans, if I'm fucked up or something like that people know it we are always 100% on stage and that is the way it always is.

So making 'Zos Kia Cultus' was looked at no different from say, 'Thelema 6'?

Actually after 'Thelema 6' we were so burnt out and didn't know where to go at the time, like I said earlier we also felt it was the top of our abilities, so for a bit it was like "what should we do now"? So in one year we did virtually nothing as far as writing but in a half month we had written the whole record, it just happened. We never force ourselves and I think that's the way it clicks the best let it flow naturally.

Would you consider your time without writing actual writers block?

No, not really because I would come up with riffs and parts, but just didn't take it ay further as far as arranging them. Right now I have riffs and ideas and I will put them on tape and wait until we enter the studio again, but I will not even start to arranging these either, not until we get closer to record.

Off the new record what do you feel are the stronger tracks, maybe a song you would play to turn someone to Behemoth?

I'd play them the opening track "Horns Ov Baphomet" or the album closer "Heru Ra Ha: Let There Be

Might" both are songs we played live tonight. I'd have to say they're two of my favorite **Behemoth** songs ever. "Horns..." is a very complex track but it's still got a groove to it, recorded with a lot of guitar tracks and very blasting I'd have to say it's epic in a way as well as barbaric. "Heru Ra Ha" is the opposite, it's straight forward it's got three riffs with a good solo but both songs perfectly define what this band is about.

When writing a song do you instantly know "this song was created to play live"?

Sure! I think the two I mentioned before are a few of them but we also have the other songs where we know we won't ever play live. "Typhonian Soul Zodiak" we knew we'd never touch live, so we were able to add everything we wanted to it in the studio. That song I feel has a great solo, but live I don't want to have to concentrate or focus on my guitar playing that much just go for feeling and let the people go crazy. I'm not a Yngwie Malmsteen and I will never be one, I'm a Metalhead jamming in a Metal band that wants to deliver ass kicking Black/Death music. So yeah, some songs to play live and some just to listen to at home.

Are you a band that rehearses a lot?

Only if we have to tour or record if neither is planned we do not, not at all. We did a small warm up tour in Norway which was three dates and I have to say the first date was crap (laughs)! I mean after two months of not rehearsing or even seeing each other it was awful.

How well do you guys get along on the road? It can be strenuous.

It is what makes us a real family did you ever notice so many bands, when they split up they split up after a tour because that's when they've got to know each other the best. It can be tough you get up and they're [bandmates] there, go to sleep same thing, you go get something to eat and everyone is on top of each other on a bus or whatever and it's a marriage you have to deal with everything too, it can't be all arguments.

How do you balance life and life outside the band?

It's all the same man. There's no difference as the band is a full time job for us, some of the guys are in other bands Inferno (drums) is in Azarath. and WitchMaster, Havok has his own band and Novy our live bassist is in Devilyn as well Dies Irie who are on Metal Blade so I'm the only guy who just does Behemoth. But I do all the management and the contracts, merchandise and promotion and press so on top of writing it all equals a full time job. Even if I'm with my girlfriend at her apartment, you know I'm sitting spending time with her but I'll go and get on her computer answer emails, answer email interviews. Then we'll watch a movie and then after I have to check emails again! So all day work for the band, phone calls, business

Live Behemoth Photos: Tom Vader

I assume since the band formed it was a goal to come and play in America?

It has always been a priority! During an interview a couple of months back we had just gotten in our tour plans and he asked me "what about America"? So I told him America, at this point is either to be or not to be. Right now I am so fucking fed up with Europe, Europe is spoiled and it's over toured and it's just too many records, too many bands and we are just one of hundreds of bands touring Europe. When you look at it like that it feels like we are hardly making an impact there, everybody has seen us so they're just, like laid back about us. Now, with arriving in America I feel the United States can be such a great potential market for us, all along my intuition has been telling me "there's people there waiting for you there, people who are hungry for Heavy Metal and hungry for what you have to offer" so we had to do this. When Olympic started working with Century Media before it was great, but now it's like we are being treated like a Century Media band and we got to meet the guys and they have been really pushing the band! I must have done forty or fifty interviews in America alone so far! I think we're treating and looking at 'Zos Kia Cultus' as a breakthrough album for us.

In some ways I'd have to agree with you, sure.

Mostly because we are newcomers here, together for twelve years but I'd say maybe 25% of the crowd tonight say, know we are an experienced older band. So it feels great to be new comers here and then to be welcome, a lot of people ask us "are you from Sweden? Germany?" and that's great to us, totally refreshing and that's what we need and we will be back.

Behemoth

[Very] Select Discography

Bewitching The Pomerania EP 97
Pandemonic Incantations 1997
Satanica 1999
Thelema 6* 2000
Zos Kia Cultus* 2003

www.behemoth.metalkings.com

Grief

Recently released is* 'Turbulent Times' *a collection of Grief's rare, out of print and hard to find 7" material complied by the band and put out by Southern Lord, it's the first and last chapter in slow torturous misanthropy and Guitarist Terry Savastano wouldn't have it any other way.

Midwest Metal: I think we should start by addressing the "new" band you're with.

Terry Savastano: Yeah, I'm playing guitar in **WarHorse** now!

No shit?! I'd heard something about this somewhere, but wanted to hear it straight from you before I got my hopes up.

Well as soon as I got into contact with Southern Lord for this **Grief** record, everything started coming together.

Mike the drummer of **WarHorse** lives like 10 minutes from me so we're always hanging out and they'd actually broke up for a bit when they kicked their guitarist out and I got a call from Jerry who was looking to do something. I wasn't doing anything at the time, I was trying to get an old Thrash/Speed Metal thing together but the dudes I was jamming with just weren't into it. But jamming with **WarHorse** has been great, I'm really pleased with it I've learned a bunch of stuff off the album ['As Heaven Turns To Ash'-ed.] and we've got a few new ones as well, so it's been cool, man. **That's good to hear. I was wondering how you got together with Southern Lord, did Greg approach you?**

No, it was me who got in touch with him. Years ago I'd always see that one picture of Goatsnake where Greg was wearing the Grief shirt, so I always heard from mutual friends that he was into us and shit like that. So I emailed him and we really started talking and the first thing out of his mouth was "do you have any old Grief stuff you'd like to put out"? And I was like, "fuck yeah". I always wanted to put this stuff out and actually had been approached by a few smaller labels, but I knew if I was going to put it out it'd be so people could actually get a hold of it! Southern Lord has their stuff everywhere, they advertise and that's all important stuff. **Backtracking I really never knew what happened with Century Media? There was the debut and that was it.**

Yeah we only did the one album with them and due to lack of sales they dropped us. I kind of think it was a blessing in disguise as we'd originally signed with them for six albums...

You signed an Eyehategod deal, huh?

Oh, totally. But we were set to record our second album, we had the songs all set the title and Century Media tells us "we're not ready yet" and I was like "oh shit"! The kid we were dealing with over there told us one of two things is going to happen. He said "we're going to record you in six months or we're going to drop you in six months" and we got dropped.

I suppose it's better to be let go then be in eternal limbo!

Yeah, that was the situation I was afraid of man.

When you think about the scene in 1994 when 'Come To Grief' came out, in a sick way you guys and a host of other bands were ahead of the times! Think if it were to come out today!

I think about that some times because now the networking you can do for any album is mind blowing. Back then it was us against the world, there was us, Winter and Eyehategod and a handful of other bands, we all just went over everyone's head, man. But being back in the game I can tell it's at least a bit easier to actually do stuff. **Yeah, the days of writing a letter and hoping it got there and hoping for a reply are long fucking gone!** Man, I'd get home from work and spent at least two solid nights writing letters, putting albums in envelopes etc. But you had to do it if you wanted your band to get anywhere, don't get me wrong I had a good time doing it but it could be a drag at times.

What about the other former Grief members. Was there any bullshit about putting this album out? Do you still get along with them?

Yeah, pretty much. I did say some bad shit about the bass player (laughs) he did a lot of the artwork for the band and it a situation where what could I say "dude, I want you in the band but I don't want you to do the artwork"? I let him have free reign and I wasn't too crazy about a lot of it [the art] but I probably shouldn't have said anything I mean he did work hard on it (laughs)! But no bullshit about getting the album out, all the guys were into it especially because some of this shit is so impossible to find this is just a cool thing because it covers everything we've done on vinyl. A lot of people I've been speaking to have always had one or two things they were missing and couldn't find and now they have it. I think that's cool.

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Necrophobic

Bonded By Blood

Ever since the dawn of time, the extreme Metal world's eyes have been transfixed by the country of Sweden. The bands from this place have seemingly ruled the scene and their names are pretty much "household" names and some of their albums are look at as land marks in the genre. Go ahead, look at your collection and I guarantee there are several releases that will never leave your possession and rightfully so they deserve the attention. One band that has been around since the beginning and for some reason unbeknownst to me has escaped such recognition is Necrophobic. Ever since they formed in 1989 they've been producing some of the darkest and heaviest Death Metal yet only the sub underground world has ever really paid them the attention the deserve. Hopefully this will change with the release of their fourth LP [and debut for Hammerheart] the monstrous 'Bloodhymns'. Not only this, but with the re-release of the bands earliest works the past and present of this killer band is out there waiting for you to discover them, do it. I spoke to Drummer/Founder Joakim Strerner from his home in Sweden about the latest happenings and here's what he had to say.

Midwest Metal: I would like to start back in 1989 when the band formed, what were the main goals when Necrophobic came together now 14 years ago.

Joakim Sterner: Well back then and even to this day we really had no goals. We'd been in contact with the underground and we all were just music fanatics and devoted to Metal so we started out of being fans. Almost every weekend there were gigs around here to go to which was how was started getting into the underground scene. So we made a demo which sold very good, so us liking the music as well as others, it just made sense to do it.

Now you produced two demos before you signed your first contract with Black Mark, right?

Yeah, we did two demos and one 7" then signed.

Knowing what you know now and all the stuff you've been through, did you ever feel it was too soon to have signed? One being the business "problems" the band has had and two the time span between your debut 'The Nocturnal Silence' (1993) and the cover MCD 'Spawned By Evil' in 1996, was that due to insufficient material or what?

Well actually we were contacted by a few labels after the release of our very first demo, and we thought then that it was too soon. After that a lot of the bands around here started getting signed, Entombed and Unleashed and even then we waited. We wanted to make sure we had strong material, we tend to be very self critical and there's a long gap between all of the albums because of this, so the combination of us being critical and the business end makes for a long gap. We've never been a band to just write any old riff in order to finish a song, to get it on an album so we have an album out every year. Before **Necrophobic** can release an album every song has to be the best we can do at that time, so the time between can be two years, sometimes longer like you mentioned. Also between 'The Nocturnal Silence' and the 'Spawned By Evil' we had some trouble in the band because I co-founded the band with David Parland (G) and in this time he started Dark Funeral. It was much easier for him to write music for Dark Funeral so it slowed us down a little, but we just had to make sure every song was our best.

When you first started getting involved in the business end of things, how did you adjust? Being a fan of music is a pure thing and the business seems to fuck it all up!

Well we haven't had any luck so far (laughs) so it's been hard being an artist as far as **Necrophobic** is concerned. We haven't been lucky getting the tours we've wanted and our old label, well they didn't support tours or gigs or anything like that. But the main thing for us has been the music, we never stopped writing new songs because we were, and this is our opinion as well as everyone else's, on the wrong label. However we are now with a better, more professional label and have finished up our first headlining tour and now we feel, "well this is how it was supposed to be on the first album".

Let's talk a little about that tour with labelmates Impious and Satariel, how'd it go?

Well we'd never heard of either band before the tour, we knew they were Swedish so we felt it could be a good time. It turned out to be a very good tour as we got along with everyone on the bus, well especially everyone who spoke Swedish (laughs)! We had a German tour manager, a German

stage tech and of course a German bus driver and we got along with everyone which made for a lot of fun. All three bands were different from each other, Satariel for instance were more Doom-y and Impious were like us, only more Thrash-y, it was cool.

Before you left Black Mark to sign with Hammerheart were there any other offers?

Well Hammerheart approached us after we played a few shows in Holland, Guido [Heijens HH Manager] came up to me and told me about his label, gave me a few albums and said to me "if you ever want to change labels I feel we're the right label for **Necrophobic**, blah, blah, blah". And even before that, the band felt we couldn't continue with Black Mark for a lot of reasons. One because we were on a mini tour that I set up, and that was something I wasn't into doing as I wanted to concentrate on making and playing, music not doing the business. So we had one album left on our contract with Black Mark and Hammerheart sent us a contract, and came here to Stockholm to have a meeting with us. From there it turned into discussions with Black Mark and us to finally to the labels talking it over, one year later we were signed to Hammerheart.

Was there ever a chance that 'Bloodhymns' was going to be released by Black Mark?

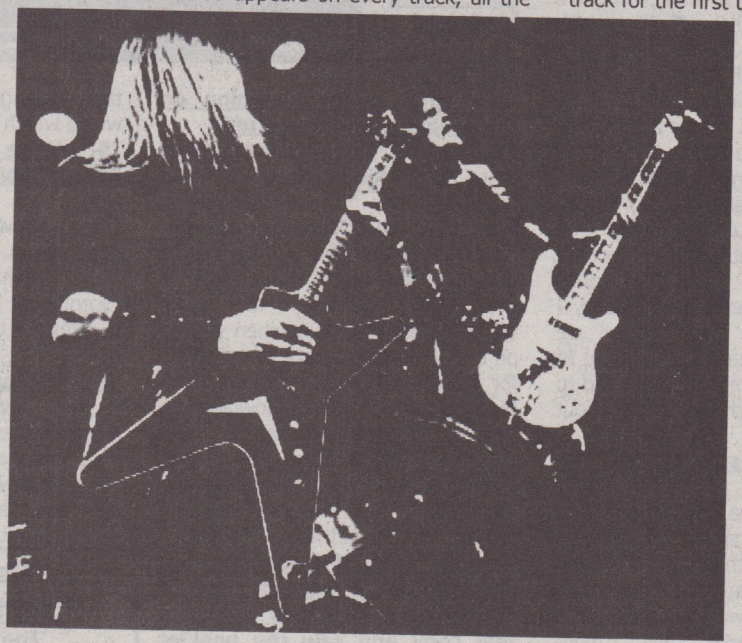
No, never. It was after all the negotiations were through that we started writing what became 'Bloodhymns'.

Let's talk about this killer album. I think the progression from [1999's] 'The Third Antichrist' to 'Bloodhymns' is amazing, it's just, to me, what I think the band has always had in them and it's finally a realization. From the material to the production to the artwork etc.

Well we wrote the album like we've written the past albums, no set concept, just come up with the best material possible, you know? I will say that very early in the process we thought about the title and we did in fact wrote the album around the title. We are quite proud of the artwork and the CD booklet, the cover was designed by Tobias and when he brought it to the band we didn't have much to add to it as it was so good. Tobias, myself and a friend of ours designed the booklet, well they did the design and I supervised (laughs), and we think it sets the mood for the album with the right atmosphere. And we did it all by ourselves so there were no mistakes (laughing)!

Is this a concept album? Where did the title come from?

No, but it looks like a concept album doesn't it? The only thing that connects all the songs is the word blood appears on every track, all the songs are hymns to us so this all makes them 'Bloodhymns'.



How were the songs written, are they born from jams or riffs or are they individually written and then arranged by the band?

We do jam on things sure, but often it's written by a member by themselves and then brought to the band to complete and arrange.

Lyrically since I bought the album I've focused in on the songs you put words to, where do you draw inspiration from?

I don't know where I get my inspiration, I know my stuff is straight to the point, the other guys' lyrics are like that too, but mine are can be from a movie, a few lines here and there and build from that. I don't read many books like Sebastian [Ramstedt-Lead Guitar] or Tobias [Sidegard-Vocals/Bass] do, their influences can vary, some come from a magicians cult here in Sweden so there are lyrics about that as well. I think you can even see something on TV and be able to write a song about it in some way or another.

Production wise, it's full and I think the best the band has achieved. What did you do different, were there different techniques? Was it a bigger budget?

I think it's a natural progression, after having done four albums it's bound to get better (laughs)! But seriously we did do a few things different, for the first time the whole band wasn't in the studio at the same time. When I recorded the drums it was only Sebastian laying down a track for me to play over and I played to a click track for the first time, which I hated. It did nothing to affect the sound but in the end I understood the brilliance behind it. We may have been more focused while recording our individual parts, less talking and stuff, hard to say, but it worked! We wanted the album to sound crushing and I think we did it.

How do you guys as a band balance everything out, between working day jobs, rehearsal/tour and life in general?

Yeah, it can be trouble at times for sure. I mean each of us feel we have to do everything we can possibly do for the band, yet with families and stuff sometimes they get hurt by all the time we have to spend with the band. But in the end they are all very

understanding, it can be hard so there are discussions, but it's something we have to do.

How often do you guys rehearse?

Right now after the tour we practice as a band maybe once per week, if we're getting ready for a tour or show or even recording maybe three or four times per week.

Something that has to be very good news is that Hammerheart have recently re-released the early albums. If you will, reminisce a little about each of the albums, starting with 1993's 'The Nocturnal Silence'

It's our debut album and it was basically the second demo as well as the 7" we'd released with four new songs. Back then we were a bit more complex in our playing than we are today but that's the way we wanted the band to play when we formed way back then. I think it's a good debut and the response we've gotten then and even now that it's back out there has always been very good.

After the 'Spawned By Evil' MCD which featured one new Necrophobic track as well as covers by Bathory, Slayer and Venom *(not being re-released)*, in 1997 'Darkside' was released.

When we were writing for 'Darkside' we just wanted to play heavier and faster and of course darker and we felt we achieved that with 'Darkside'. Many people fans and critics felt we'd turned into a Black Metal band when the album was released, Black Metal was very big then, but we always told them, no we are a Death Metal band we are still **Necrophobic**. When I look back on the album today I think the production could have been a lot better, but the atmosphere for the album as well as the songs themselves are really, really good, I mean of course they are or we wouldn't have released it (laughs)! In between the albums we lost David to Dark Funeral which we spoke about before.

Which brings us to 1999's 'The Third Antichrist'

For this album we got our new and talented guitarist named Sebastian so there was some change in the band and the music changed a bit as well. When the album was being written I felt the material was more memorable and the melodies and things were getting stronger. Melodies were always a big part of **Necrophobic** but it was on this album that they really started getting better, which if you do something long enough hopefully you get better at it!

I couldn't help but ask what was so bad about the inside art from 'The Third Antichrist' that it had to be censored?

Well the art itself was OK with Black Mark but the problem was with the distributor, SPV in Germany, they did not want to handle the album unless that painting was censored. So we agreed to do it because we wanted the album to be released and we told them to just put, like black dots over the parts they wanted censored. They got it and censored it in English and German which turned into a huge censor bar over a lot of the artwork. I guess I can see why certain people are shocked, but come on, this is Rock N' Roll!

I usually try to avoid such topics, but with the re-releases out and obviously you'd like to sell a few, what is your opinion on downloading and that stuff?

I do it myself. I don't download stuff that I don't know about so I don't sit there and say "I heard something about this band" and download a song that is uninteresting to me. I'll download stuff that I have on vinyl or even on cassette to make compilations. Especially when you go on tour it's great to have compilations for the bus. However I don't think **Necrophobic** is hurt by downloading because I feel if people hear something they like they will buy it, especially Metal fans. They want the real sound, they need to see the pictures they need the real things.

I'm like that, if I say were to have gotten a burned copy of 'Bloodhymns' and saw a friends real copy and saw the booklet and all that, it'd drive me crazy until I got the real thing. I think there should be "rewards" for putting out well packaged albums.

We really hope the re-releases sell better now that they're [more widely] available and the distribution is better that plus our name is not so unknown anymore. But that's why Metal heads are so dedicated! Look at MTV here in Europe, they used to have the Headbangers Ball show which was on at the worst time, like Sundays at 12:00 AM and everyone here watched it, we had to because you never knew if a new video by one of your favorite bands would be on. All the Metal Heads watched it religiously.

Here MTV2 has a show called 'Extreme Rock' and it comes on at 12:30 AM maybe three times per week and they actually play some decent stuff I've seen Kataklysm, High On Fire even stuff like In Flames, so that's been good.

I don't watch it but we have a show called Superrock where the hardest thing they play may be a Marilyn Manson video, maybe a Slayer video but I don't even tape it because it's way too much shit. If they would go back to a Metal show I would watch it all the time.

IS there ever a chance Necrophobic will pay here in the US?

I don't know but I hope so as it all depends on the album and if it sells good. I haven't heard anything recently but last year we were invited to a festival but somehow we couldn't do it...

Was it Milwaukee?

It may have been, I really don't remember exactly, I know it wasn't possible for a few reasons. But I hope something will happen for us to play over there as that would be a very good thing for the band.

Necrophobic
Select Discography
'The Call' EP(1992)
'The Nocturnal Silence' (1993)
'Spawned By Evil' MCD (1996)
'Darkside' (1997)
'The Third Antichrist' (1999)
'Bloodhymns' (2002)
'Tour EP 2003' (2003)
www.necrophobic.net

Usurper

...Nocturnal Disciples...

By Andrew Thomas

After a three year wait they have returned. Chicago's Usurper strike back with a new album, new label, revamped line up and a vengeance like few others and for this we had to find out more. I spoke to Guitarist/Songwriter and Co-Founder Rick Scythe about their new album* 'Twilight Dominion' *and a few other things.

Midwest Metal: The new album is finally out, talk about some of the things that have happened with the band since the release of "Necronemesis" in 2000.

Rick Scythe: Basically we got back from the Euro tour in December 2000 and we had no place to rehearse. Right before we left for Europe in November 2000, we got evicted from our rehearsal spot, so we figured we'd look for a new one when we got back. Well we couldn't find anywhere until March 2001. This left us with some unfortunate down time. In this downtime I worked on a few new songs. But also during this downtime we also decided to leave Necropolis Records. So we had no label and no rehearsal spot and things were looking pretty grim. I was going through some hard times financially and everything seemed to be spinning out of control. Then everything started coming around. We found a new spot, and got a couple contracts in our hands. I was also cranking out tunes and just feeling the vibe of the new album. We began rehearsing again and things were rolling and we were just about to sign with Candlelight when Earache approached us and we officially signed with Earache in September 2001. Then they re-issued 'Necronemesis' and 'Visions from the Gods' which lead to the Manowar US tour in March of 2002. Everything was going good, but [Dave] Hellstorm wanted out of the band for his own reasons. We were going to use original drummer Apocalyptic Warlord to play on the new album, but then we had this huge fire in the building we rehearse in. Our equipment was fine, but the building was fucked so that set us back another 2+ months. Finally we got in the studio in October 2002, Dave Hellstorm agreed to play on the album since he already knew most of the songs. So finally here we are. It was a wild roller coaster ride so it is just good to have the finished product in our hands.

Did "Necronemesis" do what you thought it would? Did it take the band to the next plateau? How do you feel about the record musically and production 3 years on? How crucial were the re-releases Earache put out? Did you see a big jump in sales due to the better distribution network?

'Necronemesis' was a classic yet overlooked album. Necropolis didn't get us any interviews or distro, and if it wasn't for the tours and shows we did for that album, I don't think anyone would of even known it was out. We brought ourselves to the next level at that time. We added a second guitarist and live we were better than ever. Looking back on that album, I really have no complaints. It was a stripped down, **Usurper** album. The average song length was only 4 minutes and had minimal dark, underlying elements. It was good for us to do an album like that since the one before that, ('Skeletal Season') was so layered and dark, and gloomy, and just very experimental. It was good to have a **Usurper** album that showcased more of the live side of the band. As far as the re-issues, I think that was something that Earache just wanted to do. We felt it was jumping the gun a bit seeing that both of those albums were only a couple of years, but since they wanted to do it we figured why not. It bought us a bit of time to record 'Twilight Dominion' and it enabled us to put some bonus tracks on each one. As for sales, I don't think Metallica has anything to worry about.

After three years seemingly out of the spotlight, do you see "'Twlilight Dominion" as a "comeback" for Usurper?

Not really. We never felt we went away. It just gave us some much needed time to re-focus and put out the definitive **Usurper** album. We wanted an album that worked well live like 'Necronemesis', yet still had some of the aggression of 'Threshold of the Usurper', and some dark, creepy elements of 'Skeletal Season'. We also wanted the feel of the album to feel like **Usurper** live. That's where everything was clean and upfront, yet still rumbly and fistbangable.

When writing a new album, do you have a concept in mind as to the final end result. (ie. right from the start, it will be darker or maybe all out faster)? Has any album turned out much different than originally planned?

'Necronemesis' and especially 'Twilight Dominion' I really wanted to create songs that would work well on the live front. As I said earlier, 'Necronemesis' the songs were written for the stage, yet I feel looking back lack some of the dark elements and over the top

agressiveness. But I really liked the interplay between the metal riffs and drumming. So on 'Twilight Dominion' I wanted to enhance that aspect with the darkness and rumble of live **Usurper**. I knew I wanted to bring back some old elements. Such as the song "Golem" that to me sounds like it could have been a missing outtake from 'Diabolosis'. Usually everything has turned out the way it was planned the only album that was a bit different was 'Skeletal Season'. Some of those songs didn't quite thrill me when I heard the final result it was almost like the rough demos for that one were more promising than the final result.

You've worked with a number of producers over the years, did you ever think a producer would ever play a role like Neil Kernon did for "Twlight Dominion" as it sounds huge as well as precise and is by far the best sounding LP to date.

Neil was great to work with. But so were Kol Marshall ['Necronemesis' and even Brian Eaton [VFTG, Diabolosis, Skeletal]! We have been fortunate to have worked with some people who have great ears and talent. Neil was killer though! He has this impressive resume of albums he's done as well as years of experience and know how. He takes so much pride on everything he does that he wouldn't let us slack. He would always push us harder, yet wouldn't get in the way of the vibe of the songs.

Does the band ever have to write music or lyrics in the studio? Some bands do this to surprising results, has this ever been the case for Usurper?

Not with **Usurper**. We don't have huge budgets so we need to be well rehearsed before we enter the studio. I demo every song and the whole band rehearses them well before we even book time. This time around we did a fair amount of pre production which really helped us to zero in on the task at hand. We use every second of each 15 hour day in the studio to perfect the songs. No time for free form jamming. It just doesn't work for a band like **Usurper**.

Speaking of writing. Which song on 'Twilight Dominion' was the most challenging for you as a songwriter? Were any songs significantly changed from the time they were written to the time they were recorded?

Songs like "Golem" and "Lycanthropic" were the most challenging from a song writing point. of view. "Golem" is a big Metal epic. It has some ultra fast double bass and intense guitar work as well as an overall weird structure. "Lycanthropic" may sound basic but it has some strange time signatures and chords. It is that little twist that gives that song that creepy, uneasy feeling. Also "The Oath of Silence" was weird for me because the General wrote all the lyrics and had a strong opinion on how the music should go, so for me it was a challenge to write a song entirely around the General explaining how he wanted the music for each part. The only song that changed quite a bit from when it was written was "Metal Lust". That song was originally part 3 of the Necrocult series so it is basically the same song yet I had to change some parts around and eliminate some things so it could stand on it's own instead of the 3rd part of a trilogy. For example it originally had a big metal ending.

"The Oath Of Silence" is a different type of song for you, as is "Vatican Time Machine"... And I see "Vatican" was seemingly the last song written for the record...will you continue to have songs with more prominent Rock feel on future albums?

"Vatican Time Machine" isn't much different than the title track to our 1994 demo 'Visions from The Gods'. We will always have some ultra basic heavy songs like that but in no way a whole album. **Usurper** has many depths, all of which celebrate Metal from basic rockers to more triumphant classic metal ("The Oath of Silence") to balls out old school black/thrash like "She-Devil" to dark doomy metal like "Utopian Nightmare" to thrashy big Heavy Metal anthems like "Metal Lust". It is what **Usurper** is about. We are fans of all forms of real metal it is in our veins and will always be present in our music.

The addition of your lead player. How much has he added to the band? Did you see the band at all held back by only having a few solos per record? Did he change the way you wrote songs, perhaps extra measures for a solo here or there?

It wasn't so much the number of solos I felt was holding us back, it was more like being limited by what we could play live. I always like to have harmonies on the albums and some songs were just too hard to pull off live with one guitar. Make no mistake though, Carcass Chris' solo style is fucking kick ass! I felt I would do the same number of solos, just have Carc do 70% of them this time. It really added some extra dimensions and live we are much tighter and aggressive with the twin axe attack!

How important is it to have the lyrical overview on all the albums. Is this because you're a fan of such inclusions or do you wish to turn people on to the strange and unknown?

I don't really care to turn people on to the dark and unknown I just think it is more interesting for the true fan to be able to read more into the songs. Some people just get off on the headbanging yet others want to really delve into the music, lyrics, story and artwork. In this day and age when kids can just burn a CD we feel it is our duty to make the packaging as special as possible.

After nearly 10 years, what keeps the band hungry? What are your feelings to playing live, being centrally located do you guys do weekend shows in Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Detroit, St. Louis?

The band is like brothers. We actually take what we do very seriously and practice 3 nights a week. No side projects or super groups, just a real heavy fucking metal band. This band makes even the shitty times in life tolerable and that's what keeps us going. We are a band that just takes things day by day and all of the sudden the years just pile up. We don't really play out much. We will be playing a record release show in Chicago in May 2003. This will be the first time we've played Chicago since 1997!

If you could only play one song from "TD" to turn someone on to Usurper, what one song would you play them?

I suppose "Metal Lust" for the headbanging, fist-banging metal anthem elements. But a song like "The Struggle of Tyrants" also showcases some of the dark brooding elements of the band.

Have you found a replacement for Dave Hellstorm?

Yes! You are the first magazine to hear this, but our new drummer for any tours is this thrash metal maniac from the bay area named Steve Sams. Steve's played with some underground metal bands in the Bay Area and Seattle, and has now moved out here to join **Usurper**. He is our new full time drummer and he kicks ass! As with all new members he will have to tour with the band and play on an album before he is 100% an official member, but he's in the band. **www.usurper.us**

NECROPHAGIA

THE UNBROKEN OATH

Necrophagia's return from the "dead" couldn't have come at a better time. After a five year wait between full length albums, the follow up to 1998's 'Holocausto De La Murte' is finally upon us and I couldn't be happier about it. Titled 'The Divine Art Of Torture', the album is pure Necrophagia, all of the elements you've come to expect from the band are here including a few surprises. I spoke to founder Killjoy from his home as he was in the process of shipping stage props to Europe in preparation of the bands first proper tour.

Midwest Metal: My first question to you is I thought I'd read not too long ago that there would be no interviews in support of the new album? Why the change of heart?

Killjoy: Yeah I'd said that a few months ago and it came down to this. If we wanted any type of Horror promotion in magazines like Fangoria or Rue Morgue etc, I had to do regular press as well, so it was kind of like blackmail [laughs]. But it's all good, it's just so time consuming and with the new line up there's really no one who could do them (interviews) at this point. From here on out the other guys will be able to do them and it'll take some of the pressure off of me, I mean I've done interviews for Wurdulak, **Necrophagia,** Ravenous and all these other bands over the past five years what more can I really say? It's not at all that I don't like the press or truly appreciate it, it's just very, very consuming.

I suppose I can see that, what else can someone say especially with certain interviews asking the same questions over and over.

Not even that as much as my philosophies and outlook hasn't changed at all, but it is the nature of the beast. Without magazines there's a lot of kids who may not be exposed to certain bands. But this year has just been so unbelievably hectic as I started the year doing the Ravenous record then the Enoch record then went to Brazil for a few weeks to do some videos, came back only a week and a half ago and in three days I leave for Europe for six weeks.

You've kept an insane pace for the past few years with the bands and label and projects. Back in the mid 1990's when you were away from the scene did you ever think you'd be back and especially at this capacity?

No, in my mind I was just done with all of it. Having been a fan of the early 90's Black Metal I was just content listening to music not creating it. I know I didn't like where Death Metal was heading from the late 80's even some up until now, so I didn't want to go out and do straight out Black Metal, so for me I was done. **Necrophagia** was always the sore thumb [of the scene] sticking out as we never conformed to any standard or whatever, so I was content and my life was a lot less stressful [laughs] and relaxed. There are a lot of times I miss that, you know what I mean?

Oh, the ability to just turn things off for awhile, some people just can't no matter what.

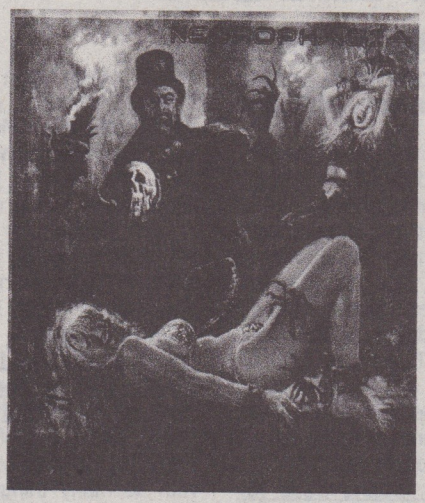
Yeah, but I'm one of those people as I do a lot if it to myself, I get involved with so many things and I actually turn down about one hundred times more than what I end up doing. And what I end up doing usually takes up about sixteen hours per day with the bands and the label, so I have no outside life whatsoever.

Let's talk about 'The Divine Art Of Torture', one of the reasons we're speaking today is the tone! This new album still has that tone and retains the Necrophagia foundation. I figured with all the new members there's no way it would still be here, especially with all the new musicians and increased abilities, do you know what I'm saying?

Yeah, that it would change a lot musically as the caliber of musicians has dramatically changed...

Totally, I mean to me 'Holocausto...' is a record I still listen to all the time, so I was just relieved that the legacy is alive.

We always want to keep the most basic elements and then expand on them, not expand like a night and day thing, but evolve it a little.



Necrophagia since day one, from the earliest demos to 'Season Of The Dead' to 'Holocausto..' to the new one it's been a constant shape shifting form. But the constant besides my vocals, which change as well, has been a riff that creates a sound of horror, to me listening to a **Necrophagia** riff is like watching a scene from a Horror movie. And whether it something very violent or something building before the scare comes up it's just pure horror.

Was there ever a point when the new music was coming together that it could have gotten away from you? Especially with Mirai coming in on keyboards, that had me wondering.

Not really because we had a pretty clear idea of what we were going after with this. For the writing I went to Norway for a few weeks and everything went relativity quick and I let the guys know the direction I wanted to go with this. After I'd written a few songs myself, showed it to the guys and after that they were able to really hear the direction and they adapted to that as well as adding their own ideas to build upon. I've said all along when we use synth and keyboards that it wouldn't be like what certain Black Metal bands or gothic bands use, ours would be used more in the way like John Carpenter or Fabio Fritzi would use them like a horror soundtrack. Sort of leaning toward a Progressive Rock feel like Goblin, just taking the creepy elements to compliment the riffs and not take away from them.

With all the lineup changes...was this something that was also planned? Was it ever in the back of your mind to take the band to the next level you had to tour, and with the previous line up that was just not possible?

Not really, I never thought it would ever get to the point where it wasn't Philip and I not working together with **Necrophagia**. It was always, in my mind when we'd get to a point where we wouldn't be able to coordinate everything then it'd be time to walk away from it. Because, to me, looking from the outside in, the last thing you want to see is when you start getting into a band and then the next thing is bam-it's only one guy there. So it was something that I really had to think hard about and it just got to the point with him being involved in so many things, and **Necrophagia** was a big part of his life for over five years I mean he really bent over backwards and did a lot of great stuff. But it just never got to the point where we'd be able to tour or having the time to sit down for two months and write and record another record so I knew if I wanted to keep **Necrophagia** going it was not going to be with that line up. Even a chance of doing a two or three week tour was just not going to happen, so I totally understood that and he and I talked and I told him I had to do something here to continue the band. So I'm not going to say he was happy about the decision, he didn't get all pissed off or anything but he was receptive towards the decision. We parted on good terms and as friends but I don't see us making music together in the future. Anything that I do now I want to be able to do shows or if an opportunity arises to do a song for a movie I feel is right I don't want to have to wait or say "I don't know" and then get back with people at a later date. Same with tours, with the old line up we got offered so many great shows, headlining festivals and everything and part of it was the nostalgic thing because **Necrophagia** was back and the other part was because the guy from Pantera is in the band and this was the first thing outside of Down he did apart from Pantera. But we had to turn everything down.

I think it was a cool thing that he was receptive and it must have been tough for you as, yeah, he was the reason for the band coming back and that record was, to me, the best thing he's ever done musically. Those riffs are clearly from the heart.

That's the way I feel too. Even if I wasn't a part of that recording, if there was someone else singing on it I still would've felt that way. That record was a total throw back with out sounding retro it added new elements and it is a really heavy, dark and raw record and was the perfect time and perfect situation.

Situation?

Back then I wasn't expecting to get that back into it [the scene] I figured we'd do a record and then it kept growing and growing and my enthusiasm kept growing as well. At first I actually regretted it I mean I got so tired of defending my decision of having him [Phil] in the band and finally said "look, you can think whatever you want but the bottom line is you can't fake those riffs", I mean if the singer of Poison can write that record, well then...

I suppose he's someone you'd want to know (laughing)!

[laughing] But I don't regret a thing it's something I'm definitely proud of but right now I'm even more enthused about music than I was when **Necrophagia** first got back together. The possibilities are really endless as far as tours, do videos with certain directors and the fact that we don't have to work around anyone else's schedule other than our own. Also musically, like you were saying before, the stuff Philip played was raw and from the heart but he'd be the first to tell you that he's not a guitar players guitar player, he writes from the heart and very heavy but it's stuff that was very catchy. His style reminded me of Venom and Celtic Frost which is great, it's very simplistic and to me it's like a

jackhammer going into your brain. So musically the new line up will be going more towards the horror side of things which is the way I've always wanted them to keep them going towards.

A lot of people have really been buzzing about the album cover for 'The Divine Art Of Torture' which is a bit of a departure for the band.

The cover along with the rest of the packaging is something we like to do as, I don't know, a little extra incentive, make the cover and booklet something the people want to own. The cover I paid for myself as it cost quite a bit of money but we were looking to capture the vibe of the album on the cover and yeah it's a little different from the past covers. It's not like we intentionally toned down the gore covers because we've had quite a few of those and those were in turn banned and I'll never go for a censored version of any of our covers, I may let them put a sticker over it or something but no way would I do a censored version. For the next album we're hoping to have Basil [Gogos] do it but it will be a much more violent cover because that's what the music calls for.

With Fangoria & Rue Morgue, how's the cross promotion going?

They're all very receptive, sure it's always something that was very important to me personally as well. I mean the response we got from being on 'the Beyond' DVD from kids that had never heard any extreme Metal or never heard Celtic Frost or Possessed or Venom or Slayer maybe they'd heard Slipknot or something. And because we were on the DVD it literally gave 'Holocausto...' a second life two years after it had come out, it just started selling a lot again and it was because of that.

Now for the first time, it's tour time for Necrophagia. You've got to be thrilled to...well death (laughs)!!

Definitely, I mean I've done six or seven shows with Ravenous over the past few years but to get out there and play night after night and have our own sound and not doing festivals or one off's, for me it's a great feeling.

What type of stage show have you got planned?

We've got a few different props all working on their own motors like a six foot tall mobile, similar to the mobile from the first Hellraiser movie with all the faces nailed to it, it's cool, it spins around with the ominous blue light coming from it. Then we have a lot of very realistic looking corpses that hang from meat hooks and severed heads on spikes etc.

What type of set list is planned?.

We're probably doing like half the new record, I think "Reincarnation" from 'Season Of The Dead', "Cannibal Holocaust", "Burning Moon Sickness", "Embalmed Yet I Breathe" maybe three or four from 'Holocausto...' and then some really old stuff like "Young Burial", "Chainsaw Lust", "Death Is Fun" so it will definitely be a pretty good mixture.

When will a US tour happen?

If it happens it will be sometime in the fall as we go back into the studio in August to record 'Harvest Ritual' and then go back on the road.

www.necrophagia.com

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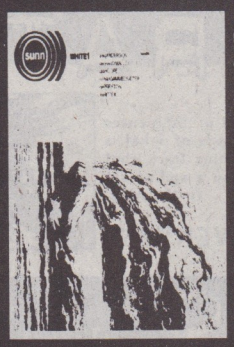

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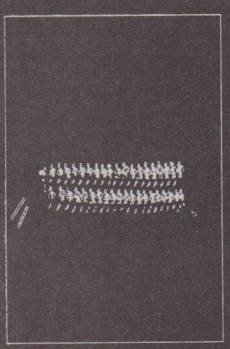

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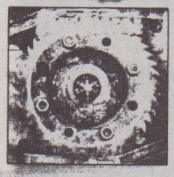

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Sworn Enemy

...Only The Strong Survive...

As far as impact is concerned, you'll be hard pressed to find a more devastating record out there in the world of Metal-Core than the latest release by Queens, New York based Sworn Enemy. Their first album for Elektra/Stillborn/No Name is called 'As Real As It Gets' and it's power is divided equally through the four basic food groups of any band [guitars, drums, bass and vocals] and the results are as punishing and honest as the people who have created. I sat down with vocalist Sal and Guitarist Mike Raffinello after their show at the Metro which was the day after 'A.R.A.I.G.' was released and here's how it went. I suggest those out there in need of a powerful album with a dose of street credibility, your search is over.

Midwest Metal: First things first, the record is finally out! It's got to be a great feeling, huh?

Sal: Yeah, especially seeing that we recorded it last March so it's been on hold for awhile. The whole time, even before it was recorded we knew we needed an album out, bad. After it was recorded we still waited while we worked out our deal, we were talking with No Name and others and it just felt like it took forever to get it all done.

Now different from most other bands, yeah the record is in limbo, but the whole time you're touring your asses off. So during all the work, did you see a light at the end of the tunnel?

Sal: I'm not gonna lie, there was a time where we were all starting to get a little worried, like "Elektra isn't going to sign us" and just a lot of talking, months worth and at one point we thought we're going to have to put it out ourselves. Which would have been through Stillborn, like the other two releases, but it was a stressful situation for sure. It started to take it's toll on us every night in the van, not so much on stage because no matter what we give 150% live, no matter what. But after the shows on the drives we're fighting and constantly bickering and everyone was getting at each other's throats...but just for a minute there (laughs)! Then we get a call saying the deal is going to our lawyer and then it was like "Thank God", you know?

Seeing that you had all this "prep" time, did you always have the title 'As Real As It Gets'?

Mike: No, it came up in the studio, we were trying to come up with something, just racking our brains.

Sal: We were in there trying to come up with the name of the record, the album cover.

Mike: It was totally stressful, but I think we work better under stress, I mean when we're killing each other we work better (laughs)!

How did you approach the lyrics for the album, some are pretty straight forward, some aren't so cut and dry. How would you describe your words?

Sal: A lot of it, if you're in the music industry, in a band you sometimes see how people change towards you when you start to do something positive with yourself. When we were nothing, I had a lot of friends. Now that we're something, you know we're doing something, a couple of those friends aren't really my friends anymore you know? And you know what? It burns me. Shit like that does drive me to write, I've seen a lot of backstabbing and betrayal and that fuels me so all I can say is you find out who your friends are real quick.

Along the same lines, with that amount of time did the record come out as you had envisioned it?

Sal: That's a catch 22 question. It's like if you're satisfied, then you're not going to work harder next time, on the other hand, if you're not satisfied that means you could've did better. So either way you really can't win, but I believe never be satisfied so this way you're always hungry and you try to progress. But with that said I will say I like the record a lot. But I'm not content I won't be until we have the world by the balls!

So even before this album sees the light of day, you hit the road. How important has it been to do every tour possible? It's been what, two years on the road??

Sal: It's the only way to sell bro. Even though we've got some muscle behind us, getting things into the stores and all that shit, doesn't matter. There's a lot of kids that don't go to the stores, they go to shows to buy their music and we've got to get to them, we have to do the Otep tours, the Six Feet Under tours, the Kittie tours, the Arch Enemy tours, the Poison The Well tours, the Hatebreed tours. Since July 2001 we've never turned down a tour, not one in fact we fight to get on tours. If you want to take us, we're there.

What about the business side, you're busting ass, how do you feel about downloading and burning?

Sal: Well on one hand I think it's hurting the artist in some way, shape or form.

Do you think it's people who don't give a fuck about the bands?

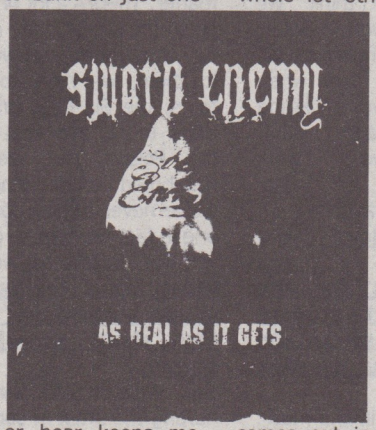
Sal: No, I think some of them do care about the bands or the music, which is why they're downloading to begin with, but to me if someone likes our band I see it as a blessing. If we don't sell records but the shows are doing great and a lot of people are aware of us because of a song they downloaded I'm not going to argue. I guess I just want kids to come to the shows, enjoy themselves and have a good time. We're not a band that's going to sell two million records and I don't think downloading is going to hurt a band like us.

That was another thing, you guys are hitting not only every market, but every style as well.

Sal: Yeah it doesn't matter if it's Heavy Metal, New Metal, Death Metal, Speed Metal, doesn't matter at all, we've got to get out there.

Now some of the guys in the band are newer, you've been here from the start so I'm sure some of the shit that you have to deal with is pretty heavy. How do you do it day after day, especially in the middle of it all? Is it staying positive the deal was going happen or just living for the stage?

Sal: I can't really think of one thing in particular that keeps me going, it's a culmination of everything. I think just a little bit of everything, I've never been one to bank on just one thing as I think it sets you up for a let down. If that one thing doesn't happen, you're devastated. So a little bit of everything keeps me going, a little of this here, a little of that there a lot of the positive things we see or hear keeps me going for sure. Also we have the best man in our corner, Jamey. Any questions we call him right up, not only is a part manager but he's also a very good friend.



Back when 'Negative Outlook' came out, I mean it's a whole different realm than where you're at today...

Sal: You know how much that record cost?

No

Sal: That was done in two days, recorded, mixed mastered etc. for $1,000.00

Jeez, you're kidding!

Sal: Not only that it was done while I had the worst case of bronchitis you could imagine.

Mike: I had just had a hernia operation and I was all fucked up, wearing a strap, I was in such pain man.

Sal: I so badly wanted to do that record over, but it's what was done and it did what it did by getting the ball rolling for us.

What were you guys doing before that? Demos, 7" just playing live or what?

Sal: We did a 7" on Back Ta Basics under the name Mindset, but we weren't doing a whole lot other than that until we hooked up with Jamey (Hatebreed). I mean we did local shows here and there did a few out of state shows once in a while, but nothing like it is now!

OK, from the change of name until 'Negative Outlook' comes out, what are we talking six months?

'Negative Outlook' comes out in September 1999, we started letting people know about the new name in May of 1999, so four months.

I hadn't heard 'Negative..' in a while, so I dug it out and think it's a solid release, it's still very heavy and everything I thought of it back then. I think it shows that you've gotten this far for a reason, I mean yeah the music business is a lot of who you know, but come on, who you know can't tour for you for two straight years with no album out!

Mike Raff: We got this far because of our drive.

Sal: Bottom line is it doesn't matter who the fuck you know, you still have to write good music. Who you know will die out pretty fucking fast if nobody is coming to see you every night, people still have to like the music.

Sworn Enemy has had it's share of line up changes...

Sal: Thousands! I can't even begin to explain how many changes we've had over the years because of different kinds of shit man. Be it last minute shows or Jamey would call and say I need you in Florida in two days and we'd be gone like that! If he or someone else calls and say's I need you here, we go. If he called and said I need you on Mars, we'd fucking go! So because of that work ethic people just came and went.

How confident are you with this line up?

Sal: Very confident, I mean this is it there will never be another change. Four of us lived five blocks from each other growing up, Raff and me have been friends since, well our parents were friends! So Lorenzo and I have known each other since 1993, Paulie myself and Lorenzo all hang out and have known each other since 1996.

How's the sacrifice part of doing all this?

Sal: I love it. I wouldn't change it for nothing, to me there's no greater feeling than going on that stage, the other 23 and a half hours, well what can you say? This tour in general, Biohazard, Most Precious Blood and E Town Concrete it's a great time.

www.swornenemynyc.com

Record Reviews

[Also included are Demos, EP's, Self Released, Magazines, Videos/DVD's and anything else that falls under the review category]

1349: *LIBERATION*-CANDLELIGHT RECORDS
Along with the new Dark Throne release **1349**'s 'Liberation' is THE Black Metal album of the year, it has to be as I can't imagine anything else coming close to the intensity this brings. Pure destruction, fast as fuck balls out speed, Norwegian hellfire command! As unrelenting as it gets and this will fuck you up for life **www.candlelightrecords.co.uk**

AS WE DESTROY: *EP*-BATTLE ZONE RECORDS
Really, really raw underground mid-to-late 80's inspired "heart metal". What's heart Metal? guys who may not be the best band in the World, but give it 100% from the heart. Old school Thrash with Death Metal influences present two original songs and a Blood Feast cover, not great not horrible just enough. **www.aswedestroy.com** =Tom=

ATOMIC NUMBER76: *S/T*-2 TRX
Short but sweet two song disc that reminds me a LOT of Kyuss and other marijuana influenced Rock. Total 70's worship, bass heavy and interesting leads over the fuzz. Lo-Fi recorded and it's cool. **www.atomicnumber76.com**=Tom

BACKDRAFT: *HERE TO SAVE YOU ALL*-ABSTRACT
Everything you need to know about this album in one single word...ROCK! Coming out of seemingly "nowhere" to make their mark with an undeniable statement like 'Here To Save You All', **Backdraft** fucking rock. Coming from Sweden these days is about as impressive as saying I have ten fingers. But lo and behold these guys just deliver a pure assault of Southern smoke styled Rock that really needs to be heard for the full experience. Parts of Foghat, Skynyrd, Blackfoot, Sabbath, Blue Cheer etc. all wrapped into one Swedish jam room. =Tom=

BIG BABY SATAN: *S/T*-CD 9 TRX
The bio compared the vocals to those of Life Of Agony's Keith Caputo so that caught my attention, I guess in a sick way I can hear it. Musically this disc it's pretty basic nothing that would rate too high on the complexity scale but I guess it's more than effective for what the band is going for. So if I had a rating scale of 1-10 I'd give this a solid 4.5 because it's just not that interesting to anyone outside of the band. But if you were to ask me the presentation of this disc is the true crime. Packaged to look like an actual release yet sounding like a shitty demo, you could see where my disgust for such things comes from. So looks good, plays decent and sounds like shit...**Big Baby Satan**, cool Dio "tribute" on the end. **www.bigbabysatan.com BBS Music 173 Farber Drive West Babylon,NY. 11704** =Tom=

BIOHAZARD: *KILL OR BE KILLED*-SANCTUARY RECORDS
'Kill Or Be Killed' is the record that should've come out in 1995 for **Biohazard**. It is a total back to basics album, no hip-hop, no guests, no filler just a raw Metal-Core album that reminds a lot of people, myself included why they dug the band in the first place. All I can say is if you liked what the band was about for the first few years of their career, you'll definitely want to check this out, it's bruising and pretty unrelenting and when it's all said and done it will be one of the records the band is remembered for. But is it too late? **www.biohazard.com** =Tom=

BIOVORE: *SCIENTIFIC PROOF*-BATTLEZONE RECORDS
Very original sounding band with an even more interesting album in 'Scientific Proof' and you need to know why. I very futuristic vibe and perhaps a little time travel present on this "concept" album, maybe? Either way I get a distinct Voi Vod with a controlled John Connelly from N.A. singing. Definitely a cool thing as it's really just good in a different way. The website sucks, but more info is there. =Tom=
www.geocities.com/biovore666/

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY: *THE BLESSED HELLRIDE*-SPITFIRE
I don't know about you but I have no beef with Zakk. He's a killer fucking guitarist and lives a fucking great life, huh? Best of both worlds some would say and I will say more power to him, 'The Blessed Hellride' shows him stretching his confines a little bit and it's cool. Adding some more melodic moments and a few slower jams to the previous repertoire makes for another solid effort by the man and definitely one worth the $$$.
www.zakkwylde.com =Tom=

BLOODBATH: *RESURRECTION THROUGH CARNAGE*-CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
I remember not being totally blown away by the tree song EP released by **Bloodbath** a few years ago. I think it had something to do with the hype about a band playing this style of Death Metal, the whole 'thought out' thing was, in my opinion, pretty dumb. If you were around for the g(l)ory days of the Swedish DM scene, the Sunlight years if you will, then this is like listening to a time machine! **www.bloodbath.biz** Jeff

THE BLOOD DIVINE: *RISE PANTHEON DREAMS*-PEACEVILLE
This is a best of collection from the late The Blood Divine. Clocking in at over 55 minutes there's a slew of unreleased and two rather raw live tracks as well. This is a cool comp and obviously the collectors and diehards already have this. **www.peaceville.com** Jeff

BLOOD RED THRONE: *AFFILIATED WITH SUFFERING*-HAMMERHEART RECORDS
When it comes down to it, all you want to do is just fucking rock, right? Well if brutal Death Metal pure and simple is your shit, here's a great album for you. Tchort leads **Blood Red Throne** through nine blistering Death Metal anthems and there's not an original note on this thing and I love it! I hear Slayer rip offs left and right and so what, this is a record to forget about being serious as it's got to be a great release/side project for anyone. I think the clarity of the recording is a huge asset as is the tighter than a ducks ass riffing. **www.get.to/bloodredthrone** Tom

BONGZILLA: *GATEWAY*-RELAPSE
Madison, Wisconsin's purveyors of all that is green have returned and they've truly brought the goods with em. 'Gateway' is the album the band truly needed to produce to make a musical statement that finally over powers their lyrical theme since day one. What I mean by that shit is the music has finally caught up with the concept of **Bongzilla** and I for one will smoke to that!! This is a huge album that shows some branching out here and there on the part of the band and I think it's their finest album to date. **www.relapse.com bongzilla666@hotmail.com**=Tom

BORIS: *AMPLIFIER WORSHIP*-SOUTHERN LORD RECORDINGS
Excellent blend of Doom, atmospheric sounds and low end abuse form Japan's purveyors of all that is heavy. This is a "lordsend" as their previous release 'Absolutego' was cool, but a

65 minute drone fest isn't exactly something I'm always in the mood for. 'Amplifier Worship' is like a mixture of the weird and the straight all hitting very hard. **Boris**, hell yeah. **www.southernlord.com** =Tom=

BRICK BATH: *REBUILT*-CRASH MUSIC
Brick Bath= shit house.
www.brickbath.com =Tom=

BURNOUT: *ARMOUR OF THE GODS*-12TH PLANET MUSIC
This is an album I was looking forward to as it's been a few years since their last release and it's finally here. **Burnout**, as you should be able to guess by the name, play a version of Smoked out Doom Rock with the best of them and let's talk about why. With Burnout you get all aspects of heavy from the crushing sludge to the pure Rock N Roll which seems to have been improved on since the last album. With an increased melodic ability the band have evolved greatly and that's a good sign as they've progressed without losing any of their raw feel and killer instinct. Blistering version of '"Mississippi Queen" sits alongside their own godly "Last Call" and "Under The Table". **www.burnoutrawks.com** =Tom=

CARNAL FORGE: *THE MORE YOU SUFFER*-CENTURY MEDIA
This is definitely a record that will not really do much for you on the first few listens. Not as instantaneous as say The Haunted or other first tier Swedish powerhouses, but this is just as deadly I assure you. So with The Haunted comparison out of the way, don't let it fool you as **Carnal Forge** have more of a metal vocalist and their attack is much more pure without the Hardcore overtones. Simply put a strong album with plenty of speed and that twin guitar attack never gets old now does it? **www.carnalforge.com** Jeff

CARPATHIAN FOREST: *DEFENDING THE THRONE OF EVIL*-SEASON OF MIST
Just when you thought the old guard of Norwegian Black Metal was either done for (Emperor) or too busy playing around with gay techno (Mayhem) along comes the necrofuck of **Carpathian Forest**. As with the original second wave of Black Metal explosion of the early 90's, it's a feel versus the sound that made the bands stick out and conquer. Well 'Defending The Throne Of Evil' has that feel, the cold and grim and chaotic feel, and for this it's an album that rates high around these parts. **www.season-of-mist.com** =Tom=

CATHEDRAL: *THE VIITH COMING*-DREAM CATCHER/SPITFIRE
Cathedral return with their seventh album and what can anyone say about them that hasn't already been said? They fucking rule, their albums (most of em anyway) are landmarks of modern Doom and as always the creative side of the band is cranked to "10" and on full display. I wouldn't say this album is better or worse than 'Endtyme', as the vibe is totally different and just as effective without being as over the top. These songs kind of remind me of 'The Carnival Bizarre' and seeing that that record ruled the same can be said about 'The VIIth Coming'. **www.cathedralcoven.com**=Tom=

CELEBRATUM: *MIRRORED REVELATION*-ARCTIC MUSIC
A blistering Black Metal assault from **Celebratum** is what I'm being blown away by right now and while it's not the most original thing it's really an enjoyable listen the whole way through. Vocals are cool, not shrieking or annoying in fact they're a cool Death Metal style that make for a good contrast to the mayhem underneath it all. Great production, great packaging and a well above

solid effort! **www.celebratum.tk** Art Baumann

CHIMAIRA: *THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REASON*-ROADRUNNER
On their last album I remember liking 65% of each song, but it was the other 35% that drove me fucking nuts! No matter the song, **Chimaira** felt the need to do something "Nu Metal" in the song. So for that I said fuck em. This new album is way more intense, no nu metal bullshit and even the keyboards are so subtle only adding depth here and there is fine by me. I suppose you could say "look who went and bought a set of balls", well the answer would be Chimaira. Go figure? They make a much better Metal band than trendy-listen-to-the-record-company one anyway. **www.chimaira.com** =Tom=

COHERENT LIQUID FORM: *NEW EXISTENCE*-CD 11 TRACKS
I thought I found the holy grail of demos when the first song on this disc started taking off! Well wouldn't ya know it I spoke way too soon as track by track it went downhill from there. **Coherent Liquid Form** go from "Black" Metal to Doom to Thrash, sometimes all in the same song, but never really settle in on a style and that's what seems to hold this thing back. From good to average each song a new adventure in what comes next finally to the end of the disc which remained average, solid but average. If you're looking for Deicide meets Crowbar meets XXX band playing @ the corner club you may want to check this out, for me too varying and way too long!
C.L.F. PO Box 9915 Maplewood, MN. 55019
clf@imperialarchives.com Jeff

CORPORATION 187: *PERFECTION IN PAIN*-WICKED WORLD
In the N.W.O.M.T.M. (new wave of modern Thrash Metal) there are plenty of bands to choose from, some good, most bad, few great and the rest fall as they may. **Corporation 187** a decent band in their own right, play said Metal and are damn good at it but some would say they have the displeasure of being label mates with a band releasing what could be the most awaited LP of the year. I suppose it could make matters worse to find out they play a similar style. Well that band aside, these guys slay with the best of them delivering bone crunching rhythm after rhythm and leads that simply shred and those vocals, slightly demented screams of anguish that bring it all to life. If Swedish Death/Thrash is your thing, don't pass this up for hype, or lack there of because it kills. Jeff

CRADLE OF FILTH: *DAMNATION AND A DAY*-RED INK/EPIC RECORDS
Cradle of Filth return with their Sony debut. And I'm sure some are crying "sellout" or are expecting something watered down. That is not the case with this album. They sound more focused and tighter than ever as the album is very guitar and riff oriented, noticeably catchy riffs and some slow pummeling parts, but still oozing with the trademark Filth sound. With this record you get a blend of all of Cradles previous work. From the early, more primitive death metal styling to their finely orchestrated key board passages and Dani Filth showing off his vocal range via evil story book like lyrics. Great album, great lyrical theme, and all Cradle fans should be satisfied. **www.cradleoffilth.com** Art B

CRYPTOPSY: *NONE SO LIVE*-CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
The first few times I saw **Cryptopsy** live were at Milwaukee Metalfest's 1997 & 98, both times they were simply fucking untouchable! I've seen them several times since but they've never recaptured that same vibe they had those first few times. This live record is surprising, I mean the band is tight as hell (as always) the sound is clear and brutal but it's really a boring live listening experience. **www.cryptopsy.net** =Tom=

DAEMONICIDE: *03 DEMO*-CD 3 TRACKS
Daemonicide is a band formed from the ashes of Tennessee Death Metal stalwarts Enter Self and current Origin vocalist James Lee and this is their first step forward. The three songs here are technically proficient, brutal and encompassing what Death Metal will always be about, the hunger to create and destroy and they do a great job of both. The songs are all really crushing and worthy to be checked into as I believe something bigger and better will be on the horizon. Info: **Tym Walker 8106 Circle Drive Knoxville, TN. 37920** =Tom=

DARKTHRONE: *HATE THEM*-MOONFOG/THE END RECORDS
No female vocals, no keyboards, no false atmospheric shit, no samples, no bullshit ALL **DARKTHRONE**! Recorded and mixed in 26 hours, 'Hate Them' is the king of the hill as far as purity goes and what more can be said? The rulers of the roost and a band that never forgot that Black Metal is supposed to be rock based this is nothing fancy, just raw and headbangable!**www.darkthrone.no** =Tom=

DAYLIGHT DIES: *NO REPLY*-RELAPSE RECORDS
Very European sounding and epic Death/Doom not totally unlike November's Doom or the classic Peaceville shit, only I wouldn't really pigeonhole them to anything in particular. If you like the above mentioned bands you'll really enjoy **Daylight Dies** as they're definitely a band to watch as this style steadily moves towards conquering North America as it did Europe many moons ago. **www.daylight-dies.com** Jeff

THE DEADLY: *PHANTOMS IN THE FREQUENCIES*-HAWTHORNE STREET RECORDS
High octane Metallic Punk, straight shooting get to the songs type band, the 5 tracks ride a fine line between semi-slick and abrasive. Features ex-members of Philadelphia based Turmoil (ex-Century Media) . **hawthornestreetrecords.com**Tom

DEMOGORGON: *SIGN OF THE BEAST*-DEMO 5 TRACKS
Somebody fucking shoot me! It's 1992 again, I fucking swear the clock has begun to go in reverse and **Demogorgon** is taking full advantage of this! From Bismark, North Dakota comes a band that is the epitome of basement band, not that that's a bad thing, but maybe a little tightening up on the writing and recording and we'll be set to tango again, huh? Demo-gorgon sound like they're serious, but this demo sounds like some kind of joke or maybe it's to impress all the "black metallerz" in Bismark? It's nowhere near Black Metal and it's in dire need of some outside ears, that's for sure. **PO Box 4102 Bismark, ND 58502** =Tom=

DEMON HUNTER: *S/T*-SOLID STATE RECORDINGS
Cool name, even cooler logo some really cool parts and some hope for this band, I think. **Demon Hunter** is the pro god version of a band like Brujeria, ya know an "all-star" cast with hidden identities and I'm sure the majority of us could give a rats ass who's who. Some of the more powerful stuff on this album is really good, very powerful and pretty straightforward. Then you get a lot of "Nu-Metal" type stuff, rhythms/beats and vocals that sound like the work of the Roadrunner A&R dept. So what

to do? That's for you to decide, are you a closet Slipknot fan? If so this will rock your pitiful world.
www.demonhunter.net Jeff

DISSECTION: *LIVE LEGACY*-NUCLEAR BLAST
Being inactive for years has killed many a career however **Dissection** fans have never weaned in their loyalty and respect and surely have never been forgotten, 'Live Legacy' shows why. A fierce band that played every gig like their last, Dissection reign supreme on this disc and for those who missed the bands only US tour, this may or may not be the closest thing to ever witnessing their excellence again. Let's hope not. =Tom=

DIVINE EMPIRE: *NOSTRADAMUS*-OLYMPIC
In some weird sort of way I wonder if people actually consider **Divine Empire** anything other than a glorified demo band. For a band who create really bland blasting Death Metal, that has not only been done before but done better, and do absolutely nothing with it how could I think of them any other way? This new album is like their last two and it too follows a similar paint-by-numbers game plan with the most redundant results this side of Incantation. If you like it dull you'll love this.
www.olympicrecordings.com Jeff

DIVINE RAPTURE: *PROMO*-5 TRX
Really boring and typical 90's Death Metal where everything that could be bad, is. Cheese all the way, these guys even ruin "Pull The Plug" by Death! Bad news, I don't give a fuck who they recorded shit with, it sucks.
PO Box 159 Chester, PA. 19017
www.divinerapture.net =Tom=

D.R.I.: *THE DIRTY ROTTEN CD*-BEER CITY RECORDS
While I'm not too sure if the past few years have been kind to the legacy of Spike and Kurt, but this re-release of one of the most classic crossover albums sure brings back cool memories. **D.R.I.** were more than just a band they were an institution, a band that played some of the fastest and most intense music and paired it with lyrics that were as spontaneous as the band themselves and the results were always on. This re-release of the 'Dirty Rotten LP' plus a shitload of extras including demos, live tracks, two radio interviews from the Houston days when video clips from the bands one and only performance at CBGB's and what more could you ask for?
www.DRI1.com
www.beercity.com Jeff

EMPEROR: *SCATTERED ASHES...A DECADE OF EMPERIAL WRATH*-CANDLELIGHT RECS
I recently received the anticipated 2 disc collection 'Scattered Ashes...A Decade Of Emperial Service' and I'm just enveloped in it. I still stand firm that **Emperor** is the only Black Metal band able to get away with the keyboards, as this early shit on here is very effective to say the least. Well as far as songs are concerned, all you need to know is they're all on here the hits the misses and everything in between, 27 tracks of pure Metal for the current, the present and for sure the future. **emperorhorde.com** =Tom=

THE END: *TRANSFER TRACHEA REVERBERATIONS...*-RELAPSE
From the biography, it read this: **The End** craft startling intense, memorable songs that demand repeated listening. Well after a weeks worth of spins, both stoned and un-stoned, busy and not busy, driving and sitting I can say there is nothing at all memorable about The End! It is Noise/Grind/Technical with tons of percussion brilliance and a dime a dozen noise core vocalist, yes. Memorable, no! **www.relapse.com** =Tom=

ENGORGE: *DEAD...FUCK.... ...BLACKNESS*-DARK HORIZON
Very primal Black Metal with various results some of which are good, most however which are bad. To get right to it in this day and age I refuse to listen to bands that come out with albums that just sound like shit as there's no reasons for this, cult or not, get a fucking good sound dammit. If Darkthrone can do it, so can you and if you want to go for the shit sound, release a demo cassette, it's way more cult than a CD. Sounding like shit aside there's some decent stuff on here, some really kick ass original parts and some good playing but in the end it all suffers due to shitty sound. =Tom=
www.darkhorizon666.com

FLESHTIZED: *HERE AMONG THORNS*-FOREVER UNDERGROUND RECORDS
I'm fucking totally blown away by this. Honestly there's not a god damn things very original about this album in fact it's straight up late 90's/early 00 Death Metal only this is done to absolute perfection! Very much in the "Corpse" veins, but just presented and delivered with such force how can you not like this shit? Cool songs, great drumming and vocals are low but absolutely not comical, dead on and solid cover of Morbid Angel's "Rapture" as well. In fact there's a extreme M.A. feel to this album, but it far from cloning. If you're a Death head that likes it ½ technical ½ brutal you need this.
http://home.hiwaay.net/~eformatt/fleshtized =Tom=

FOETICIDE: *WAR, DOMAIN & TORMENT*-SEMPITERNAL PROD
Sounding at times, like any of the classic Swedish Death/Thrash bands of yester year **Foeticide** keep it pretty straight thrashing away most of the time, they do have some Blackened vocals here and there and they work for the, music they create. Besides the 10 tracks there's also two bonus demo cuts. Check em out!
sempiternalproductions.com Tom

FURY OF FIVE: *TELLING IT LIKE IT IS*-INNER RAGE RECORDS
One of the best Metal-Core bands that ever roamed the Earth was New Jersey's **Fury Of Five**. From the moment I saw them back in 1995 I knew they were different, as they just stood out from the crowd and would continue to as the years passed. This MCD is an updated version of the 7" the band did with Inner Rage Records back in I think '95 and if you've never heard it then, here's your chance. Ultra catchy Metal-Core with some of the sickest riffing this side of the underground is what the band should always be remembered for. =Tom=
www.innerragerecords.com

GALLERY OF MITES: *BUGS ON THE BLUE FISH*-METEOR CITY
What do you get when you have ten guys, five lead guitar players, ten songs and a whole lotta jammin' going on? Well the debut album, 'Bugs On The Bluefish' by a band called **Gallery Of Mites** is a start. Boasting such affiliations with bands like **Monster Magnet**, **Solace**, **The Atomic Bitchwax** can give you some sort of feel for what the music contains, but truth be told that's only half the battle. You've got to listen, listen to the free form, listen to the rock, listen to some of the coolest guitar interwork on an album in a very long time.
www.meteorcity.com =Tom=

GRAVE: *BACK FROM THE GRAVE*-CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
What year is this? **Grave** have turned back the clock without fucking

FULL BLOWN CHAOS
prophet of hostility
"THIS DISC IS HEAVY. I MEAN, SERIOUSLY GODDAMN HEAVY" - PASTEPUNK
"THE MOMENT "BLOODFLOW" COMES BLOWING OUT OF YOUR SPEAKERS YOU'RE GONNA WANNA DESTROY YOUR ROOM" - WMTD ZINE
"Fans of gigantic breakdowns, low end grunts, and complete and utter annihilation will love this record."
-Hitthepit.com
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anything up, at all, I mean this is just a fucking killer Swedish Death Metal album without any of the melodic bullshit and posturing. Whatever the members of Grave have been doing since we last heard from them with the less than spectacular 'Hating Life', they've done it right and made 'Hating Life' a forgotten memory. 'Back From The Grave' is a creation by originators of the sound and it shows, it's got the trademark buzzsaw guitars, solid throaty vocals and everything falls into place from there. KILLER!
www.intothegrave.com =Tom=

THE HAUNTED: *ONE KILL WONDER*-EARACHE RECORDS
As a relative late comer to the metal party known as **The Haunted** I was always skeptical to the massive praise they received, was it hype or were they really that good? Well with the release of 'One Kill Wonder' should prove to many that the band is quite the force to be reckoned with. While it's more straight forward than the previous album 'One Kill Wonder' delivers Slayer inspired Thrash Metal that does the job. **www.earache.com** =Tom=

HELLOWEEN: *RABBIT DON'T COME EASY*-NUCLEAR BLAST
I was nervous and excited when I first received this album as I wanted it to be good. My first listen through the album was everything I wanted it to be and while it's a big departure from 'The Dark Ride' and I liked 'The Dark Ride', but it was kind of a departure from the previous albums that I so much liked. "Just a Little Sign" is the melodic fast heavy opener which gave me nothing but a smile as I listened to this. The whole album is just solid all the way through. Session drummer Mikkey Dee (Motorhead) and guitarist Sasha Gerstner (Freedom Call) fit into the **Helloween** sound so well that you don't even notice Grapow and Kusch's departure from the band. This is just a great album and has all heaviness and melodic hooks that make Helloween such an awesome band. **www.helloween.org**
K. Wollenberg

HOSTILE GROOVE: *PROMO 2003*-CD 4 TRX
My guess is **Hostile Groove** is what Hollywood "Metal" is all about. There's no doubt they're a solid band albeit one who worship Machine Head, Pantera, Sepultura and even some Rap-Rock acts is totally apparent because listening to these four songs all I hear is the above mentioned groups. I really don't hear much originality or a band taking any chances as their sound is already been to the top and in some cases on it's way out. It may be well executed material but it's too bad the material itself is not that good. **www.hostilegroove.com** Jeff

HUMAN RITUAL: *OFFERING*-CD 4
When anyone mentions a band possessing brutal and at times "melodic" vocals, the first thing that comes to mind is Nu-Metal. Well I have news for them and you, this band here, **Human Ritual** do possess a brutal vocalist with an amazing melodic voice as well and they're anything but nu-metal. Thank God! The things this band does right, they do it well, as this shit is very percussive heavy and punishing and the vocals really carry these songs well. If I had to compare them to anyone, I hear some 'American Way' era Sacred Reich mixed with Arise/Chaos era Sepultura. While this is probably not for everyone there is definitely something for many. =Tom=

IMMERSED IN BLOOD: *KILLING SEASON*-ARCTIC MUSIC GROUP
Insane over the top Swedish grind, just 1,000 MPH pure holocaust with nothing but blast-a-licious beat after best. Lyrically it's what Tom would "bitch killing/pussy ripping shit" and I'd agree, but when there's a song called and about "Supreme Bukakke" I mean, how can you not laugh at the lyrics of this shit? But musically it's some of the most intense balls out grind I've heard in awhile.
www.immersedinblood.net Jeff

IMMOLATION: *UNHOLY CULT*-OLYMPIC/CENTURY MEDIA
Brutal Death Metal is a style usually congested with the sounds of yesteryear. Too many bands stick to the same damn thing year after year until there's no one left who even gives a fuck anymore. I think it's a good thing when a band like **Immolation** can come up with something just a little different album after album destroying the stagnation a band like, say, Incantation has developed. On their latest, 'Unholy Cult', it's a definite progression in not only the songwriting department, but in over all production and presentation as well and this is a good thing. Right now it's hard to say how many times I will find myself going back to this album especially seeing the only catalog album I pull out from time to time is their 1991 debut, so yes it's a progression, but the underlying fact is this is still brutal death metal, best made for the stage.
www.immolationdirect.com Jeff

IRON FIRE: *ON THE EDGE*-SANCTUARY MUSIC
I think all in this entire album was all right. I thought musically it was well put together and the songs on this disc are really cool but the singer on the on the other hand I wasn't to found of. At times I found him to sound a bit too cock rock for a Power Metal band/album. Other than that it's a really cool album. The band goes from a really hard rockin' sound to almost a Deep Purple vibe with some of the organ sounds. **www.ironfire.com** K. Wollenberg

ISIS: *OCEANIC*-HYDRAHEAD
I can go on for days how different this release is. But I won't because there's really just one word for this album and that is "Perfect!" This album had its warning's of how it will be different then past releases but as some people say change can be a good thing and this album has proven that. The album is intense as always but more to a point as well. The riffs don't repeat themselves over and over for 3 minutes straight like past albums, but in turn they [the riffs] have become heavier. The female vocals on track 7 are very useful too and fit into the mix well. In closing, this Boston based band have not released a disappointing album yet and this will be cherished by open minded people who are looking to experiment with different music. **www.hydrahead.com/isis** Scott Stevens

JESTERS MOON: *S/T*-CD 10 TRX
This is my first time hearing of **Jester's Moon** as well as the bands the members were in before joining forces, but I think I can turn more than a few of you on to them. For a band to be this rooted in classic Heavy Metal is such a good thing, no blast beats, no acid gurgle vocals no overly distorted anything as these guys just shoot straight from the heart. Definitely a Judas Priest feel to not only the music but the vocals in a sick way too. No, not high pitched screams or anything, but the vibe and delivery just remind me of Rob Halford. Classic Heavy Metal, great leads, catchy tunes and a refreshing listen, check these guys out. Jeff
http://jestersmoon.iuma.com

KAMELOT: *EPICA*-NOISE RECS
This was enjoyable and the majority of the album I found to be really cool.

There were some parts that, to me just sort of dragged and lost the initial energy that album started off with, but I'm sure some of it had to do with the telling of the story. All in all really cool release with great melodies and well put together Power Metal songs. The band brought in some different sounds as well as a host full of guest appearances.
www.kamelot.com K. Wollenberg

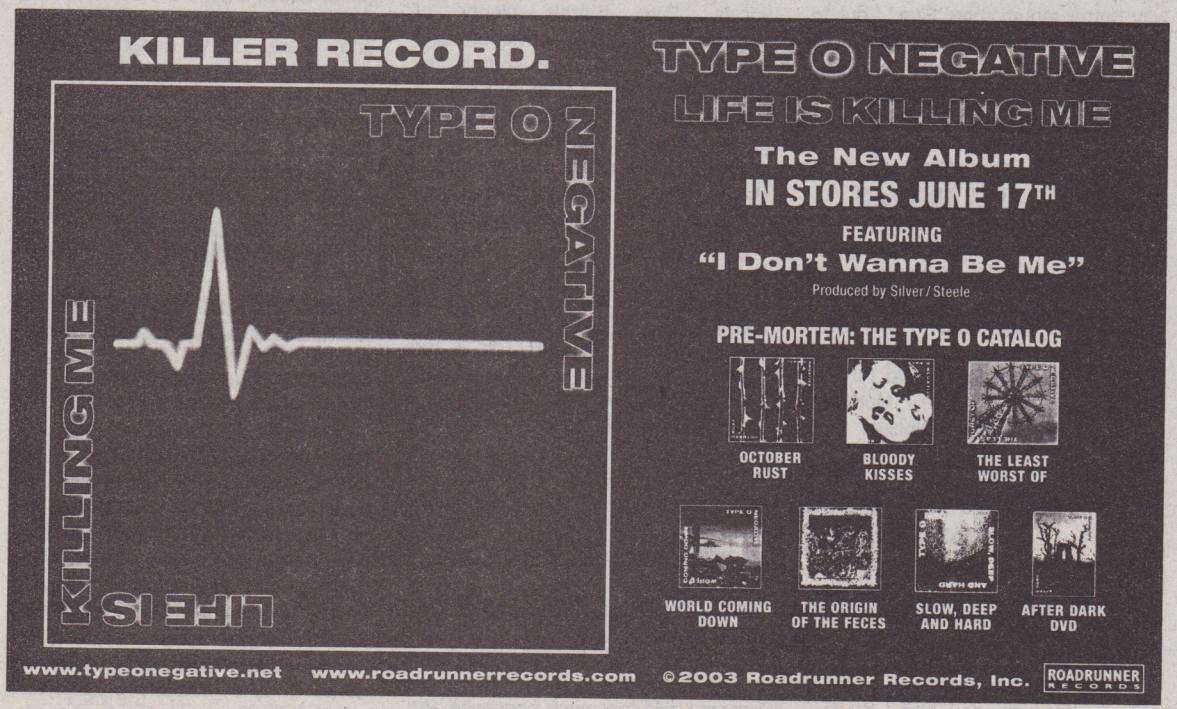
KING COMBINE: *S/T*-CD 9TRX
This is a very solid, heavy ass, borderline sick in the head, rock album by Ohio's sons of smoke **King Combine**. Excellent guitar work is an instant highlight amongst all the tracks here as the great interplay between Matt and Kevin is the back bone of the sound, which reminds me of a more Metal, more double bass aggressive less southern ATP. And ya know what? That's a fucking cool thing as KC just throw it down. =Tom=
http://kingcombine.tripod.com

KISS: *ALIVE FOREVER*-BOOK
KISS fan or not this is one of the most impressive Rock books I've ever read! Two absolute freaks (Curt Gooch & Jeff Suhs) catalog EVERY KISS show played from 1973-2002 (1,810 to be exact) and tell you when, where, with whom, promoter, capacity and attendance and leave nothing out. It's amazing to say the least, it really is. Along with the facts you get stories from original KISS crew members both past and present which lets face it, are more entertaining than reading about the 'Asylum' tour! There's also some well deserved shots thrown in to Gene and Paul and who could blame em? Great book, very thorough and original and worth every penny!
www.kissaliveforever.com=Tom=

LEGEND: *STILL SCREAMING*-MONSTER RECORDS
I never heard any of the original **Legend** material so I cannot even fake knowing what this is supposed to sound like. But I do know it's excellent, melodic solid Hard Rock with tons of quality moments and even better arrangements. If I knew nothing about this band, I could've told you they were "old school" because modern bands do not put tunes together like this anymore! For fans of classic Metal only!
www.monsterrecords.com=Tom=

LICKGOLDENSKY: *THE BEAUTIFUL SOUNDS OF...*-ESCAPSE ARTIST RECORDS
Noise core bands are fast becoming the new dime-a-dozen as far as I can tell and why not? What better therapy is there than heavier than fuck guitars, matching drums and vocals that release any and all demons by screaming your balls off? So indeed **Lickgoldensky** are a band that do the above, but they do it well enough to avoid being lumped into the rest of the bands doing the same thing. That and they got their name from an Eyehategod record sleeve, so you know they're on to something deeper than the average band. Top of the notch brutal noise core featuring ex-Turmoil (Century Media) members nuff said.
www.escapeartistrecords.com
Jeff

MACHINE HEAD: *HELLALIVE*-ROADRUNNER RECORDS
Love em or hate em **Machine Head** is a live band, I've seen a lot of their shows and never once did they fail to deliver. 'Hellalive' is no exception. Set wise they dig deep with songs from 1994's 'Burn My Eyes' and a few each from 'The More Things Change', 'The Burning Red' and being on tour when this was recorded for 'Supercharger' there's obviously a handful from album #4. If you're a fan of any of their stuff this is essential.
www.machinehead1.com =Tom=



MAGAN: *NATHICANA*-SEMPITERNAL PRODUCTIONS
Extremely keyboard heavy Black Metal EP from Mexico that failed to impress me other than the dedication to Paul Baloff. Well done, but just too many fucking keyboards. **magan@yahoo.com** =Tom= **Sempiternalproductions.com**

MALEVOLENT CREATION: *THE WILL TO KILL*-ARCTIC MUSIC GROUP
Never say die! Like the black cat's of the extreme Metal scene, Florida's **Malevolent Creation** again defy all odds by not only surviving in the business, but upping the ante as well. With original throat Brett Hoffman out of the band again for the final time, in steps Kyle (Hate Plow) and at first I wasn't crazy about the change, but, fuck! Just listen to this shit! A clearer delivery with the intensity of one thousand psychopaths the latest incarnation of MC just may be their strongest since the Roadrunner days! **www.arcticmusicgroup.com** Jeff

MERAUDER: *BLUETALITY*-CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
Back in 1996 Merauder released 'Master Killer' and they had the world seemingly by the balls, all they had to do was get along long enough and it was theirs. Ever since then, a long fucking seven years, who knows what happened to them. Sure there was the follow up 'Five Deadly Venoms' but that sucked, and now they're back for round three. I will say it's a way better album than 'Five...' but to me lost time is wasted time and it's hard to take this band or their intentions seriously. **www.centurymedia.com** =Tom=

MORTICIAN: *DARKEST DAY OF HORROR*-RELAPSE RECORDS
This being the final release on Relapse records for Will and Co. means...? Well that means this will probably be the final **Mortician** review you'll ever read in this mag. Why? Well because I sure the fuck wouldn't buy this now would I? That being said, this is a new Mortician album, dark, ugly, repulsive and bruuuuutal. Like the all the previous albums and like the future five this is horror movie inspired electronic drum madness. **www.mortician.net** =Tom=

MOTIVE: *WORN DOWN DREAM*-CD 10 TRACKS
Hailing from Phoenix, Arizona **Motive** definitely have their sights on bigger and better things and if this demo/disc here were the magic 8 ball, it'd say "maybe". **Motive** play modernized Thrash and do it quite well, but as with a lot of demo discs the quantity may over shadow the quality a bit. For every good/solid song there's a really shitty one and with odds like that you may end up being remembered for a band that writes 50% crap. The good are good, like I said modern thrash metal songs with more than decent chops. I'd like to see/hear a four song follow up of all killer songs come out next. **Motive 5225 E. Thomas Rd #218 Phoenix, AZ. 85018 www.motivemetal.com** Jeff

MY OWN VICTIM: *ABOVE IT ALL*-CD 11 TRACKS
Kentucky's scene stalwarts **My Own Victim** have been fighting the good fight for a long time now. Their past accomplishments speak for themselves as they've done some good records (for Century Media) good tours and it's good to see they're still around after having dropped out of "the spotlight" after the CM deal. It's been a long time since I've busted any of their stuff out but I know for a fact there's been quite a few line-up changes. Most notably in the vocal department, but before I get to that I've got to say the time away from the "spotlight" hasn't diminished the hunger of the music coming from these guys as it's still brutal metal-core with hooks their own brand of breakdowns. While I like the songs a lot, the blemish on this otherwise solid album are the vocals. Sure there's plenty of aggression tons of conviction and heart the problem is he sounds like Phil Anselmo. Not a little, not only in places, but the whole time! Every time he sings something the only thing I can think of is Pantera. It's a shame too as this stuff deserves better. **BrianOmer@aol.com** =Tom=

NAPALM DEATH: *ORDER OF THE LEECH*-SPITFIRE RECORDS
This is **Napalm Death**! This is the reason they were one of the biggest bands in extreme metal for so many years and one of the reasons they're back on top where they belong! If you haven't checked this out yet, you're missing out on a landmark release! =Tom= **enemyofthemusicindustry.com**

NOCTIFERIA: *PER ASPERA*-ARCTIC MUSIC GROUP
I have never heard of this band before receiving this disc to review so I cannot add too much nonsense and filler words here. What I will say is they're not that bad, a little been there, heard that but to me as long as it's done well its cool. Sort of a symphonic blackened/death metal assault is what I'm hearing not totally original but very listenable. Great drumming, vocals are totally BM 101 and their use of keyboards brings this down a few notches because to me they don't even need em. Sort of a Emperor meets Satyricon ['Nemesis Divina'] style that's decent at best. Too bad the keyboards are so prominent as these guys could benefit from a raw attack. **www.arcticmusicgroup.com noctiferia@angelfire.com** Jeff

NOCTURNAL FEAR: *STERILIZE AND EXTERMINATE*-UNHOLY RECORDS
For all the bands in the USA and there are millions of them why couldn't there be more bands like Detroit's **Nocturnal Fear**? The ways of the old run deep in this quartet and they wear the mark of the beast proudly as the thrash through ten tracks like it's their dying day and they show no remorse. Old school Death/Thrash delivered with an intensity comparable to early Kreator and Celtic Frost, Very intense and very worth the $$. **www.nocturnalfear.net** =Tom=

OBEISANCE: *LUCIFER MASTERUTERLY SOMBER CREATIONS*
Absolute old school chaos, sounds like Cronos fronting a modernized (blast beats, etc.) Venom with subtle Celtic Frost parts creeping in here and there. Very underground in production and presentation but make no mistake this is pure Hell unleashed and the soundtrack to the end of everything. Old school Black/Death/Thrash freaks, jump on this.
Sempiternalproductions.com obeisance666@hotmail.com Tom

OLD MAN'S CHILD: *IN DEFIANCE OF EXISTENCE*-CENTURY MEDIA
This is the return, so to speak, of Galder and what a comeback. It's been close to three years since the 'Revelation 666' album and while the man has surely kept busy with Dimmu Borgir, it's here where he truly belongs and this album is the proof. Enlisting DB band mate Nick Barker to play drums was a wise move as the list of stick men who have occupied the throne in **Old Man's Child** is a lengthy but talented list. So together the two of them lay down a solid modern Black Metal attack, still heavy on the keyboards, but still enjoyable enough to remain

at the top of their game no matter what the times say. Solid as ever!
www.oldmanschild.tk

OTTO'S DAUGHTER: *RENEW*-ANGEL WHORE RECORDS
If you're one of the closet fans of Gwen Stefani's music, imagine her and Marilyn Manson having a baby, she would sound like Jacqueline van Bierk and it's kind of cool. New Jersey's **Otto's Daughter** is a modern band who plays an electronic pop with light industrial overtones and when all is said and done they're really good at what they do. Amazing production only adds fuel to this fire as 'Renew' sounds as good as any major label release. This is a very eclectic album and well done on all ends. Open minded? You'll benefit from this one.
www.ottosdaughter.com =Tom=

OVERKILL: *KILLBOX 13*-SPITFIRE RECORDS
'Killbox 13' sees **OverKill** do what they do best writing heavy songs, some fast, some slow and a lot of mid paced crunchers with the worldly recognizable voice of Bobby "Blitz" and that's really all you need to know. The album sounds fucking great just punishing, a great job by the band and Colin Richardson and this always helps pick up on the textures of songs like "Crystal Clear" or "No Lights". I think this is probably one of the best line ups the band has ever had and after all this time I'm just glad they continue to fight.
www.wreckingcrew.com =Tom=

PAGAN WAR MACHINE: *S/T*-CD 4 TRACKS
Here's a Los Angeles band featuring [ex and current] members of Dreams Of Damnation, Abattoir, Dark Angel so right away expectation are high. Well **Pagan War Machine**, formed by Jim "fucking" Durkin and Steve Gaines, live up to the lofty expectations with four songs that rely on powerful almost anthem like songs of brute force with tasteful speed as well. Is it perfect, no, but the foundation is laid for bigger and better things as "Bulletproof" kicks it all off with a Thrash Metal workout and it all kicks ass from there.
www.paganwarmachine.com

A PERPETUAL DYING MIRROR: *TOWARDS A CONSTELLATION VIEW*-SEMPITERNAL PROD
As you can tell by the name of the band they're a Death/Doom styled band. It's slow, brooding stuff long ass songs with some interesting vocal work, but essentially you'd have to be a real fan of Anathema, My Dying Bride or even leaders of the US style November's Doom.
Sempiternalproductions.com
=Tom=

PHAROAH: *AFTER THE FIRE*-CRUZ DEL SUR MUSIC
I didn't really get into this. To me there was just nothing interesting in this album that appealed to me. I just found it to be a bit boring as the riffs and melodies just never really went anywhere. While I did hear some good ideas, they seemed to sort of dissolve and go nowhere. This just reminded me of a really bad Iron Maiden clone.
www.cruzdelsurmusic.com K. Wollenberg

PISSING RAZORS: *LIVE IN THE DEVILS TRIANGLE*-SPITFIRE REC
I guess the thought that you have to mean shit before you go and release a live album must be something only I think. **Pissing Razors** who have made a name for themselves by sounding like Pantera, have a new live album out and this must be a release for their hard core fans because I can't see why it exists.
www.pissingrazors.com =Tom=

PRONG: *100% LIVE*-LOCOMOTIVE MUSIC
My hatred for Tommy Victor is matched only by my hatred for Scott

Ian, Phil Rind and a few others I'm forgetting about right now. So the news of a live **Prong** album is about as welcome as an appointment for a root canal. Fuck Tommy Victor, fuck Prong and fuck off! =Tom=

SCEPTER: *FUCKING METAL MOTHERFUCKERS*-MERCILESS RECORDS
Never ones to have the displeasure of being mistaken for playing calculus type Metal, **Scepter** has always kept it very straight to the point. Release #4 follows suit with 12 songs of Metal mayhem including odes to drunk driving, whores and the code of ethics, shit everyone can relate to, right? This is Scepter, they play what they are, they are what they play...Metal. =Tom=
sceptermetal@hotmail.com

SCORCHED-EARTH POLICY: *SALVAGE NOTHING*-02 DEMO CD
Last time we heard from Oakland's **Scorched-Earth Policy** was back in Issue #24 and they were good then, well they're probably even better now. Still as solid as they come with all the shit the "big boys" deliver S.E.P. have an amazing collection of songs here and it'd be a fucking shame for you not to hear them. Pure Modern Heavy Rock with tons of Metallic influence, great and much improved vocals and riffs, oh the riffs just keep coming. If I had a record label I would sign these guys today! I mean this is pretty flawless stuff here and this is heavy yet melodic and structurally inspiring enough to appeal to more than the underground. Brilliant Neil Young cover closes this thing out too, how cool is that? **www.scorched-earthpolicy.com** =Tom=

THE SERVANTS: *MOSTLY MONSTERS*-FUGITIVE RECORDS
The past few years has seen an increase in Rock and fucking Roll, has it not? From the "stoner" scene to the sounds of the "new" South to the Swedish Hellacopters type stuff and everything in between it's a great time to ROCK. Well of all the above mentioned styles there not too many bands I've heard that take the classic approach of letting the music do all the talking and knowing once that's done everything else will fall into place. **The Servants** hail from the San Francisco Bay Area and on their debut, 'Mostly Monsters' they capture an era long gone delivering catchy, melodic boot stomping edgy Rock N' Roll with an emphasis on the power of the song! Now if you're into 70's "Arena Rock" like Zeppelin, Skynyrd, Grand Funk Railroad as well as the classic Aerosmith groove, 'Mostly Monsters' kicks a shitload of ass.
www.servantsrock.com =Tom=

SEVEN WITCHES: *PASSAGE TO THE OTHER SIDE*-SANCTUARY
The riffs are just mean and to the point and it's just rough and heavy. I would recommend this one to anyone who enjoyed the last one. Vocalist James (Destiny's End/Helstar) Rivera really adds a nice touch the band as does bassist Joey Vera (Armored Saint). These guys are just giving it their all with their brand of hard thrashy riffs and brutality good to know the band sounds like it has finally come into being a unit.
www.sevenwitches.net
K. Wollenberg

SEVERE TORTURE: *MISANTHROPIC CARNAGE*-HAMMERHEART RECORDS
Offering up absolutely nothing as far as originality goes is a band synonymous with unoriginality and that band is **Severe Torture**. You want to talk severe torture? Try sitting through one of their Cannibal Corpse inspired pieces of plastic and then have to spend even more time trying to write about it. Like a time warp back to 1992 only instead of it being somewhat fresh and diverse it's just one of a million of bad "raised on Death Metal" bands.
www.hammerheart.com =Tom=

SIR HEDGEHOG: *S/T*-ABSTRACT SOUNDS
Ah the rock flows well in Canada my friends. I don't know if it's the clean air, the availability of many potent beers or the scenery, but the rock flows up there. **Sir Hedgehog** is another one of the bands doing it well, mixing the classic/fuzz sounds with modern technology and coming through with some kick ass shit.
www.lunasoundrecording.com

SKINLESS: *FROM SACRIFICE TO SURVIVAL*-RELAPSE RECORDS
I wasn't into the Relapse debut by **Skinless** one bit. I don't think I even liked their demo from a few years back either, but what a difference a few years makes. 'From Sacrifice To Survival' is an incredible album, really a strong piece of work from start to finish and I'm nothing short of impressed. The combination of stronger songs, (maybe) a bit more maturity as far as lyrics are concerned, Neil Kernon's incredible production and John Longstreth's inhuman drumming and this is a fucking killer album! With all the hard work/touring this band is known for, having this album behind them makes the scene theirs for the taking.
www.4skinless.com =Tom=

SOFA KING KILLER: *LUST CRIME AND HOLINESS EP*-AT A LOSS RECORDINGS
Really enjoyable EP here from a band that seems to have a grip on exactly how they want to sound. Super confident and effective smoke rock and none of the usually one dimensional shit either. This is heavy, bluesy and well arranged shit that just hit a chord with me to say the least. Reminds me of a super heavy 70's jam band with a purpose and direction as it's very cool and definitely recommended to fellow brothers of the bong.
stonerrock.com/sofakingkiller
www.stickfiguredistro.com Tom

SOILWORK: *FIGURE NUMBER FIVE*-NUCLEAR BLAST
Just when you thought the limp wrested total Swedish sell out phenomenon has hit an all time high with the last joke of an album from In Flames, comes this! In what has to be a competition to release the most un metal album in the universe between In Flames and **Soilwork** I'm not quite sure who the winner would be as they're both just un aggressive, overly melodic, and lacking of anything I'm looking for in an album.
www.soilwork.com =Tom=

SOLEFALD: *IN HARMONIA UNIVERSALI*-CENTURY MEDIA
One thing **Solefald** cannot be described as is typical, I mean these guys are way the fuck out there with everything! Maybe this is a little to "intellectual" for me, but there's just too much going on here! The basics (gtr/drms/vox/drms) are all present but so are keyboards, saxophone, piano, weird backing/dual vocals and that's just the first song! But seriously these guys are in an abstract-Black-extreme-progressive-class all by themselves and only the most astute absorb everything listener need apply! **www.centurymedia.com** =Tom=

SOUL DEMISE: *IN VAIN*-SEASON OF MIST
Germany's **Soul Demise** is an "old school" Swedish DM sounding band but have a more modern sound, no buzzsaw/Sunlight tone here, that are like I said pretty good. However these days it seems like there are just way too many "pretty good" bands and not enough jaw dropping killer ones. If there's a way to get this

cheaper than full price, then by all means. But if it's $15.98 I'd have a hard time parting with my cash. **www.season-of-mist.com** Jeff

SPIRITUAL BEGGARS: *ON FIRE*- MUSIC FOR NATIONS/KOCH
Just a killer combination of classic underground rock and modern riffs of power! **Spiritual Beggars**, as a collective unit definitely know what they want out of their band and achieve exactly what they set out to do. 'On Fire' the latest by Michael Amott's "other" band lays down one solid song after another incorporating a bad ass groove, moog keyboards and the amazing vocals of JB (also vocalist in Grand Magus) and the album shines! Classy shit. **www.spiritualbeggars.com** Tom

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD: *SYL*- CENTURY MEDIA RECORDS
Extreme music is only as extreme as its creator and this is a fact, there's no posing and pulling the wool over anyone's eyes at this point in the game, that is why this record succeeds, it's as real and as intense as its master. I'm not one of those people who will put Devin on a pedestal, but every once in a while he truly belongs there. If you're a fan of the man, the band or the genre where it's alright to take chances this album is for you. **www.strappingyounglad.com** =Tom=

STRATOVAROIUS: *ELEMENTS PART I*-NUCLEAR BLAST
This album is just awesome! **Stratovarious** with some of their best work to date and this is the kind of album that I like to hear from these guys. "Eagleheart" is the melodic opener that took me a few listens to get used to, but I really liked it especially after the melody just kept running through my head. Another eye opener is the super speedy "Find Your Own Voice" or even "Learning To Fly". All the elements are here with the melodic hooks, orchestrated runs, and the speed that is so much a part of the Stratovarious sound. It also seems that they finally turned Jens Johannson up in the mix as Jens just burns on this album. Actually the whole band just burns and the album just leaves you wanting and waiting to hear 'Elements Part II'. **www.stratovarious.com** K. Wollenberg

STRONG INTENTION: *EXTERMINATION VISION*- COALITION RECORDS
I haven't heard from **Strong Intention** in at least three or four years and damn, it's been a long time. They could be described as pure musical violence with a nod toward the Cro-Mags meets early VoiVod and as crazy as that sounds you should hear this shit. The last thing I remember from these guys was a Metal-Core thing and this current stuff is just over the top insanity. Great for what it is, but if you're expecting anything other than bizarre you'll be out of luck. =Tom= **www.strongintention.com**

JOE STUMP: *REIGN OF TERROR*- LEVIATHAN RECORDS
The first time I saw Joe Stump I thought, "What a fucking Yngwie rip off". Musically speaking **Joe Stump** has definitely taken huge influence from Malmsteen and he's also hired ex YJM singer and keyboardist Mike Vescera and Mats Olausson respectively. If you really wanted to hear this type of metal I would recommend going to the source. Stump's attempt is weak. He may be able to play the Malmsteen licks and arpeggios at speed but the songwriting is just not there. The guy is full of cool neoclassical ideas and solo's but the songs aren't up to par with his playing ability. If it was all-instrumental it would have been a lot better. True Vescera and Olausson give great performances but can't help to make up for the poor songwriting or production **www.joestump.com** K. Wollenberg

SUMHATE: *S/T*-CD 4 TRACKS
Sumhate is a band with one foot in the Nu-Metal world and one foot in the world of whothefuckknows. The band is tight, the mix on the first song is really, really good, but after that the feel is just not there. On one hand they sound content on being a "metal" band and then some awful melodic vocals kick in and throw everything off. This happens more times than not throughout the four tracks and it leaves me more confused than anything. **www.sumhate.com** Dave

SUPRA RED: *S/T*-SANCTUARY
This is the release by Michael Kiske's new band **Supra Red**. I must admit that at first I was expecting something like Helloween. Being a huge fan Michael's work in that band I figured it's got to have some of that sound, right? After listening to the first track I had come to realize that this CD was nothing like Helloween. What I came to find that this man has a completely different side musically as the music present is more modern pop rock. The songs are really well crafted with lots of hooks. The heaviness of the guitars is definitely toned down, but the melodies are great and left me listening to this a lot and enjoying the other path that Kiske has chosen. **www.suprared.com** K. Wollenberg

SUPREME DISPASSION: *YES LORD, WE WILL SHIT WITH YOU*-PINCH & ROLL RECORDS
Maybe just a little too weird for me? Nah, this is a time waster is more like it. Guys out to have fun, but something tells me they take some of this seriously. I got a ½ funny vibe from the album the other ½ was "we're actual musicians"!!!! So I think joke records are better if they're played by actual losers! **www.pinchandroll.com** =Tom=

THEORY OF RUIN: *COUNTER CULTURE NOSEBLEED*-ESCAPE ARTIST RECORDS
This record reminds me of a post new wave Devo-ish form of Noise Core that isn't so noisy. It's actually a vocally unique Rock album with a cool modern recording technique (I know nothing about) but it sounds good. If you like weird shit mixed with hints of aggression and strong first person lyrics, you'll dig this. **www.theoryofruin.net** Jeff

THUNDERCORE: *FIVE DEATHS*-MACE MUSIC
I really can't get into this. I've been listening for a few days now, trying to come back to it and each time I'm not enjoying it. **Thundercore** are a non-rap-Nu Metal band, if such a thing exists, it does not. There are structures here that just reek of Roadrunner wanna be but then a Pantera-like track will come on and that's supposed to be heavy? It almost reminds me of a lower rung version of Bludgeoned, a little behind the times yet totally competent. **www.thundercore.com** =Tom=

TODAY IS THE DAY: *SADNESS WILL PREVAIL*-RELAPSE RECS
Jesus, if there's a voting for artist who's lost their fucking mind, **Today Is The Day**'s Steve Austin wins. This is a double album totally not of this Earth, as the shit on here is for those of us who may not have completely lost our minds, but somewhere along the way have shed more than a few cells. From the extreme to the surreal to the mellow to the end of the World it's all here and while it may not sink in on the first ten listens, it will. Also mood will play a big part in absorbing this album, it's not background music or something to put on to _____, it's music to feel, pure and simple. So in control of his mind or not, Austin turns in a product he's obviously bled onto and that's what we're all here for in the first place! **www.todayistheday.org** =Tom=

TORG: *HOT YOGURT ENEMA*-CLAMBAKE RECORDS
In the great spirit of the Mentors and G.G. Allin comes a band destined for greatness because, well because I said so. **Torg** is a bunch of guys who rock for the sake of rock and I imagine have a fucking great time doing it. True there's a lot of "fun" type Punk Rock stuff ("Partying With Jesus" anyone?) on here there's also a few killers like "Blinded By Darkness" or the serious themed "For A Friend". All in all good shit by a band not afraid of what anyone fucking thinks. **www.torg.cc torg666@yahoo.com** =Tom=

TRIBE OF JUDAH: *EXIT ELVIS*-SPITFIRE RECORDS
Ex-Extreme/Van Halen man Gary Cherone's new band. This is Modern Rock with electronic elements thrown for good measure. The man gets bonus points for having stuck it out with the Van Halen brothers, even if it was only for like eight months **www.tojonline.com** Tom

TUSK: *GET READY*-HE WHO CORRUPTS INC.
Tusk is a name you will probably hear about in the future as they create utterly insane and totally bombastic core music. With one foot in Heavy Metal land and the other in outer space, both lyrically and musically, Tusk hand deliver a good old fashioned ass kicking via 9 songs of OTT chaos masquerading as musick. Did I mention the lyrics, must reads if I may say so myself. Tom **www.hewhocorrupts.com/inc**

TWELFTH GATE: *S/T*-CRASH MUSIC
I remember getting a really good vibe seeing these guys support Symphony X and Blind Guardian. Musically it's heavy and dark with interesting twists. Lots of operatic vocals blended with plenty of heavy riffing. It's a bit progressive in the way that this band seems to run with lots of ideas and changes but always seems to bring back the key elements of the song. I'm interested to see what **Twelfth Gate** will do next **www.twelfthgate.net** K. Wollenberg

VA: *CONTAMINATED 5.0*-RELAPSE RECORDS
Two CD's, over 40 tracks, a bazillion bands and THE name for underground entertainment for over 10 years, **Relapse**. The latest massive compilation from the purveyors of all things extreme has all the bands, from Nile to Mastodon to Repulsion to Pentagram to Soilent Green to Nasum if they're on the label or were part of the roster at one point they're here. **www.relapse.com** =Tom=

VERDICT: *REFLECTIONS OF PAIN*-CD 9 TRX
Thankful that I was given another excellent demo, I must ask the question especially seeing I have one right in front of me here. The Haunted are the rage, I mean everyone is talking about the band, the records and all that shit right? So where are all the THRASH bands? Where are all the kids picking up 'The New Order' or 'Game Over' or 'Slaughter OF The Soul' and giving it their best? Because that's what I have here in 'Reflections Of Pain' by Germany's **Verdict**. Fucking Thrash heaven, razor sharp riffs, a little groove here and there (I said groove not "jump") and the whole thing smokes! Fans of Dew Scented would be wise to find out more! **www.verdict.de** Jeff

VITAL REMAINS: *DECHRISTIANIZE*-OLYMPIC REC
Amazing what a new lease on "life" will do for a band huh? Not that they

ever lacked a certain something, but **Vital Remains** were purely a cult band if there ever were one and we all know there is nothing wrong with that. Their latest, and first for Olympic, album 'Dechristianize' is just about as solid of a Death Metal soon-to-be classic as I've heard this year. The recording line up of Lazaro, Suzuki and Glen Benton make one hell of a trio as they destroy all during this intense display of brutality, originality and all out ferocity.
http://vitalremains.cjb.net Tom

VOIVOD: *S/T*-CHOPHOUSE RECS
What an absolute amazing album! With the news of Jason Newsted's arrival on planet Morgoth, the World of **Voivod** seemed to take on a second wind like few others. But hype and promise is one thing we all knew everything depended on one thing, this record. Originally titled 'The Multiverse', this self titled release shows the creative spirit within the gang has not dissipated but over the years it's developed into something not of this world. I guess that's the point, huh? Well musically it falls in between 'Angel Rat' and 'The Outer Limits' only stronger in just about every sense. I can say this, a good record may sound good, but a great record *feels* good. This is all feel! Top 5 record of the year, no doubt! **www.voivod.com** =Tom=

WOODS OF YPRES: *AGAINST THE SEASONS*-CD 5 TRACKS
Very well done Black Metal, nicely recorded, some interesting songs and an overall understanding of the genre are all very fucking important rules of mine and **Woods Of Ypres** succeed! Seriously, this is a self released disc that is really good considering all the shit Black Metal that seems to creep up out of nowhere and end up in my mailbox, getting something like this is a gift. Like I said an understanding of the genre is important and W.O.Y. [most importantly Drummer David Gold] has a grasp on the good about Black Metal, enough said.
www.woodsofypres.ca Jeff

WURDULAK: *SEVERED EYES OF POSSESSION*-SEASON OF MIST
If you were one of the dedicated who picked up a copy of 'Ceremony In Flames' a few years ago you're going to be pleasantly surprised by this album. In fact, I'm going to say the people who will get the most out of this album will be the ones who can chronicle the growth spurt between the two albums as it's pretty remarkable. An increased and improved vocal assault from Killjoy and Maniac are a noticeable thing as are the riffs. Heavier in every way is 'Severed Eyes Of Possession' a killer Blackened Death/Thrash display of horror! **www.season-of-mist.com** =Tom=

YATTERING: *GENOCIDE*-CANDLELIGHT
There's no doubt the musicians that compromise **Yattering** are some of the most intense and electrifying metal players in the scene today. Similar to early VoiVod there are times when listening to their albums the listener can feel overwhelmed with the endless patterns and sheer dexterity. Well not at all like the mighty VoiVod, Yattering have no grasp of the English language and tend to put inane lyrics to great music such as "Rapist Victim" or "Murderer (You Are) which make no fucking sense at all. So if you need to hear the Metal equivalent of the Olympics, check this out, just don't expect anything once these guys open their mouths. Jeff

Midwest Metal Magazine
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MARDUK

BLACKCROWNED ETERNALLY

What more can you say about the Satanic Swedish war machine known around the world as Marduk? They've been a force to be reckoned with for well over a decade and in that time have over fifteen releases ranging from full lengths, EP's live albums and other assorted time capsules. Their latest is called 'World Funeral' and it should go down as yet another landmark release for Black and Extreme Metal for years to come. I spoke to Vocalist, Legion for this interview.

Midwest Metal: I think the new album is fucking great! I think it's some of the best stuff the band has come up with yet and after over 10 years that's pretty impressive!

Legion: Thank you very much man, the words we've been hearing from the people and the press as well have been very strong indeed.

How do you feel about 'World Funeral' from an insiders point of view?

I'm very content with it because it just felt so awesome, from day one of rehearsals until today it's been nothing but god. When we did our last album [2001's] 'La Grande Danse Macabre' we were a band with problems within the band and we were under tremendous pressure. The 'Panzer [Division Marduk]' album we never thought it would become what it did, we thought it would be something for the diehards only, as it was our anti-statement on the scene at the time, basically. But looking back I guess it was received as a fresh breath because of the timing of it so we toured all of 1999 into the end of summer of 2000 behind that album, just non stop. At the time our booking agent was really pushing the band and they came to us and said they had a really great tour for us for the Spring 2001 and it was something we couldn't miss. So we told them "no problem, we'll have an album out by then", but the problem was we never really got to start really writing because of all the tours and all the bullshit in the band. The music we came up with was just from us hanging out at each other's apartments it was Morgan's riffs and my lyrics, actually looking back Morgan contributed some lyrics too which was the first time he'd done so since I joined the band. But it was ideas, bring them to the rehearsal room, blast them out and it like "there's a song". So in the fall of 2000 we recorded 'La Grande Danse Macabre' in just nine days and in the same timeframe we also started our own label [Regain Records] so all of it was just a little more work than we expected (laughs)! But we were just busting our asses every minute we were awake and when the album was done we did think "we should've done this or that" you know? Then we left on more tours!

So 'World Funeral' didn't suffer from such circumstances?

No, not only did we have some time to write but we're a rehearsing band again and we're enjoy being at the rehearsal room. For this album we brought all our shit to the room and worked, all four of us just really got into it and spent so much time and energy in the creative process. Even the recording of the album, as you probably know Peter [Tagtgren] has shut down Abyss as a commercial business, so apart from Peter's own bands it's only us and Immortal who are welcome there now so it feels like recording in your own backyard! I mean he just tosses us the keys and say's to us "knock yourselves out"(laughing)! So it was really relaxing to have the time and not have to deal with the bullshit pressure.

We cannot talk about the new album without mentioning the production. Example, in a song like "Bleached Bones", it's a slower song that seems to intensify due to the clarity of the mix. Do you think, say something off 'Panzer...' if it had been slowed down would been as impacting with a different production?

Well a good production, when done right seems to be tailor fit to the album itself. Peter has grown as a producer along with us growing as a band. We were one of the first few bands that sold some records and made it to Abyss. So you can say at Abyss is where we really found our sound, so I like to think Peter and us made each other. Before us he'd done really tiny bands and of course Hypocrisy, but after us he got to produce so much Black Metal, even our albums recorded before Abyss

don't sound like nothing. Peter has toured with us through Europe [for the Heaven Shall Burn tour] as a session guitarist and when we do festivals he's been our stage tech and in one way or another always helps us out, we have always considered him the fifth member of **Marduk**. And when you think of the Abyss studio and how much it's grown it's just a very kick ass studio, a very kick ass complex. It's a 128 channel all digital studio and then Peter as a producer his skills have grown so much too. But I really never thought of the second part of your question, but it feels like every album has been a step forward to get us to this point.

I always like to ask, what was the first song written for the album?

It was the opening track, "With Satan And Victorious Weapons". That was one where we sat down and at the time Morgan was fresh out of riffs and he said to me "we should start writing, but I don't know where to start with this blah, blah, blah" you know? So he had the lyric for the song, his only lyrics on the record, and I said "yeah I've got a couple of riffs" so I showed them to him and they're the riffs in the song and he was really excited. And only a couple days later he'd written a few more songs and my lyric writing started to flow as well so the rest of the music was done by him and the lyrics were mine.

Very cool, you were able to switch things a bit and motivate one another.

Yeah, we deviated from the normal routine and inspired each other.

A song I keep hearing a lot of reaction from is "Night Of The Long Knives", what can you say about this one?

That's a song that was born out of pent up aggression so the lyrics came out extremely violent as well which is good to scare the crap out of the Germans to begin with (laughs)! But "Night Of The Long Knives" has a historical ring to it the title comes from an expression the Germans used when they'd say, sort out the bad apples from their own party. During World War II all the guys who weren't on the ball with what was happening, similar to the end of the first Godfather movie, basically that's what happened over the two or three days and it was called night of the long knives. And in Germany, to this day, it is very hush-hush. But it's just a song about not letting shit bring you down or let anything stand in your way. So it's a great song title and if you can mock certain people in the process, well there's nothing wrong with that now is there? Back when we first started we had some problems with the major players in the German music industry, they didn't want us around at all, they tried to hold us back you know? But when that didn't happen and we started selling a lot of records and touring there they tried to brown nose us, so it's our way of provoking a bit(laughs)!

Back a little bit ago you mentioned the problems within the band. Was that with Fredrik [Andersson former Drummer]?

Yeah. We'd grown apart pretty bad since he didn't want to be a Metal musician anymore, he just lacked motivation and from my point of view pretty strange ideas about stuff...

You mean musically?

No not even it was just as a guy you know? I mean all of a sudden when we were discussing things we weren't on the same level anymore, he'd say something and the rest of us would just sit there with, you know question marks above our heads, "what the fuck"? He just didn't want to be like the rest of us, we live and breathe for this and you can't have a guy like that in the band like that if you want to get somewhere. Everyone has to be able to give the ultimate otherwise it's not going to be any good and we're definitely pursuing the next level. So we noticed this with Freddy back in 1999 and by 2000 we talked it over and said "Freddy has to go", but we really didn't know what to do about the situation, there's a lot of drummers out there, some are really good in talent but are so-so upstairs, you know? So we just started going to concerts checking out drummers and none of em were that awesome, so we wondered if we were going to have to fly in a drummer for the album? So we set the record straight and let Freddy go.

How scary was it the let him go? I mean did it ever become an issue of "what of we don't find someone for six months" etc.?

Nah, we knew there are a lot of killer drummers out there, for instance a lot of Americans are really kick ass and we knew we'd get by with flying an American in to do the job, we could afford that through the label. But now that we have a guy who only lives like two hours away from here so he's able to rehearse as much as we need to.

Your new Drummer, Emil how long did it take for him to fit in? I mean Marduk as a unit has been solid for a lot of years.

Yeah more and more everyday he's growing into the band. But from day one we were pretty much on the same page with him, the basic stuff you know? He also has, you know rotten humor like the rest of us which in our case is one of the most important things. That's the way we clear the air amongst each other, if there are fights between us in the band that's the way we deal with things by making bad jokes or insulting someone's mother (laughs)! So when he first joined he didn't know what to think about that stuff and on top of that his recording experience has only been demos with his other bands. His first even **Marduk** show was at the With Full Force Festival in Germany in front of 11,000 people! Before that he's played to maybe 40 or 60 people here and there, so he was scared shitless (laughs)! About a week later we co-headlined a show with Machine Head in Finland which was huge, so he got used to it pretty quickly. At the end of 2002 we did a festival tour which was like an extension of the dates we did with Danzig so he was so into it and now it's been about a year he's been in the band so we've grown together pretty quickly. I think what helped a little was on the festival tour back in December we hadn't played a lot of European dates outside of some festivals in almost a year so the support we got was fantastic. No matter what songs we played the crowds were just going nuts, fistbanging and chanting "MARDUK MARDUK" and that just leads us to go fucking crazy!

Of course Marduk over the years has been synonymous with touring.

I love it! I love to travel and the experience of it all is great, I like to hang out with the people who live in these places, they usually have many bizarre stories or whatever. But the thing is those minutes up on stage make it worth all the sitting around you have to do throughout the day. Metal music is meant to be played live, it's just got this crushing vibe and ferocious energy to it and the crowd's energy it's like a big fucking vortex. That keeps us alive and motivated a band like us has to travel because where else can kids get this release? MTV doesn't have the balls to play something like us so if we don't tour distribution doesn't mean a thing. But the whole touring experience is still awesome to us and I'm really glad I get to enjoy what I do every day.

We also have to address the troubles the band has faced getting back into the US after the successful US tour with Deicide back in May 2001.

It's just been crazy, the European INS is the real problem I mean they cannot be reasoned or bargained with or anything. And on top of that you can't even call or contact them to get updates on the situation, what they do is request material and no matter how much information you give them they go to the embassy and come back to you with one sentence and that's that! And after you give them everything it takes one hundred days for them to come back with that one sentence, that's the way they deal with people. After the first tour there in May 01 we got an offer to return, like instantly and of course we accepted because we had such a great tour finally getting to the States. So then 9/11 happens and the INS just rips up all the forms we'd already submitted and they decided to really investigate anyone who applies and Morgan and I have kind of crazy pasts, but in respect to what happened on 9/11 we did understand they have to be strict. I actually got a government letter from the US Traffic controls and usually they just give the thumbs up to our American label and they're telling us "thank you for not canceling your tour, a lot European bands are canceling and we think it's great you want to come over and play and you know be pro American and give the kids some hope and all that". And after that letter arrived we were really excited until the INS said "nope" so our American booking agent rescheduled the tour really fast thinking the next time we were up to come over it'd be no problem and the INS said "no" again. So we just thought maybe we shouldn't tour the States again until all the bullshit is sorted out and then we got offered the Danzig US tour and what can you say? We tried to do it again and even Glenn's people were working for us trying to make everything happen which was very cool of him, you know? But when it didn't happen we got to do the European tour with him and for now we'll just be patient until we can return to the US.

I think it'll work itself out and know there are a lot of people who will be there for the return.

Yeah, the day we get our paperwork we'll start seeing who's going out and do what we can to get on the best bill as support and then we'd love to be able to come back maybe six months later and see if we'd be able to headline.

Let's talk a little about Black Metal in 2003. Where do you see the scene heading and where does it go from here?

I don't know, the scene is always going to be about the underground and new people with new ideas and then crossbreeding here and there. But I just don't see as many bands just wanting to be Black Metal. Maybe it's because they've grown up? I really don't know but I do know we still get a kick out of everything the same way we did when we were 14-15-16 years old, like discovering new bands going to underground shows and trading demos and things like that. So in the back of our minds that is the motivating factor to keep on going, there's some good bands releasing demos and some good albums out there but I guess time will tell where it all goes. The Black Metal scene as a whole is not as exciting to me as it was in the early 90's, back then it was just so cool to go to Norway or to Gothenburg just to meet people and to me that vibe is gone. Too many bands have wandered in different directions and that's the reality.

Since you guys have been in charge of your own destiny for a few years with your own label, how has life changed for you?

At the end of the Osmose days we were just so pissed off, not only had we and Immortal reached our limit to what the label could do for us. I think the reason a label gets away with anything and everything is because they can do so much for you as a band, they can push and promote you and keep your career going. But we felt like we outgrew them and then they started with their French stubborn pride bullshit. We then started calling distributors on our own and they all said "we'd go with you for sure, we know exactly what you sell" and the funny thing was all these distributors reported bigger sales numbers to us than Osmose had. I mean what would Osmose gain by lying to us? They even tried to sue us for another album and they lost! So I'm glad we tried it, we got a lot of offers from numerous other labels and we always knew in the back of our minds if we fail we can always sign to another label, the only real failure would be not to try at all. So we tried and it worked, and it's working so good now because we're able to do whatever we want. We're not having to answer to some guy telling us we're fucking up his label so we had to suffer for it. Osmose only had a couple bands that sold over 2,000 copies of albums so that meant they took all of our and Immortal's money and spent it on finding useless bands! The money generated now goes into buying advertising or tour support or whatever, so yeah I'm loving being my own boss!

I'd have to guess it's better for you as a person as well as a musician knowing you're not being taken advantage of.

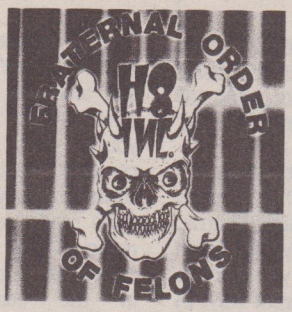
Sure and nothing is more satisfying to reach personal goals and to be successful at what you do, definitely.

www.marduk.nu

H8 INC.

Ex Cold As Life member(s) team up with friends for a brutal Death Punk take on life. Fierce as all hell album* 'Fraternal Order Of Felons' *out now! Interview with Vocalist Beast. By Tom & Art Baumann

First, introduce the band, what they do and how you got together.



So the line up is now me screaming, Big Dog (g), Roy Bates (d) and Emery War (b).We all knew each other, I was always hanging with C.A.L. and the boys and I've know Big Dog for years, going to his show when he was in A.L.D. Emery War, was playing with a local band Without Warning and also playing in a Black Sabbath cover band with one of my best friends so that's how we knew him.

How long has H8 Inc. been in the making?

H8 Inc was originally a tag and a logo for my cousin Darrel Maniac years before in like 85. Darrel and I wanted to start a band and call it H8 Inc. Darrel went to prison and Jeff and I started it in late 96, it went real slow for years.

How's the reaction been to the shows?

Good. But we haven't done many, just a hand full. And during that time people didn't know us as I only made two hundred copies of the first demo and it was distro'd mostly in Detroit. We're starting to do shows now.

Have you been able to work on new stuff? Even though you write most of the material will the music change due to the different personnel?

I want to have Big Dog write a little and Roy can play guitar too. I don't know at this point when a new CD will be out. I'm always writing music but right now I think were just going to focus on this CD and some shows.

Some of the lyrics seem to reflect a common theme of incarceration. Are they based on personal experience? Can you expand on the other lyrics?

Well the lyrics, I was never in prison I only spent a few weeks in a jail before, but like I said before my cousin Darrel made the name up [and artwork too], and he was always in and out of prison. So when he was in we would write letters to each other and the inspiration came from that. So the rest of the lyrics have to do with my experience of life, friends, government strangers just every day shit.

How's the current scene in the Detroit these days?

The scene in Detroit right now is not much as far as hardcore. Things have slowed down for now. The rock and roll/garage scene is huge. There's always good music going on, if one thing slows down another takes off. If you like a varity of music it's there, if your narrow about one style I don't know what to tell ya.

What do you think the music scene needs more or less of?

Less trendy, wannabe bullshit. More original output with more chaos! Less pattern, more open minds, more out spoken views, less repression.

Any final comments?

Jeff G. is gonna release a comp CD of all the early Cold As Life shit with original singer Rawn Beauty on C.T.Y.C. Produtions! Email **jeffgctyc@aol.com** also look out for Detroit Punk The Paybacks and "S.B.L.C" "The Hillside Stranglers" "Pub-Life", "Bumpin-Uglies", and "The Clone Defects"! Sworn Enemy is gonna take over the world watchout! Checkout **www.h8inc.com** or email me **H8incdetroit@hotmail** thanks for the time bro- cheers.

Darkest Hour

Barrier smashing is nothing new to Darkest Hour as they prove once again they're the real deal when it comes to Swedish Thrash Metallic mayhem. I spoke to Guitarist Mike Schleibaum upon the release of* 'Hidden Hands Of A Sadist Nation' *which features appearances from members of The Haunted, The Crown, is out now! **www.darkesthour.cc**

Let's begin with what you accomplished with the 'So Sedated, So Secure' album, the tours etc.

Well we toured the US six times, we did one full Canadian tour I'd say the best tours we did were with The Crown and the other was with Dillinger Escape Plan. We got to do two European tours as well as an Icelandic tour, which was great. Definitely the Metallium Tour with Six Feet Under was the hardest tour for us as we'd been out for so long at that point it was just the hardest time of being in the band. So when we were writing that record and signing to Victory we said to everyone we're going to tour as much as we can, and well, we did!

Also with the last record you were able to solidify the label situation, how great was that to the band's mindset?

Man, it was totally relieving! But the funny thing about being in a band is once something gets fixed something else goes wrong! But yeah it's a relief to know the record will be where kids can get to it, we do wish it were a little cheaper, but something you just can't control.

Let's talk about recording the new album, I'm sure the label was "overjoyed" to hear you wanted to record in Sweden!

We actually we did it in a way where it wasn't that much more expensive than the last one we did. Our drummer Ryan and I has this idea of "it would be awesome to actually record with a Swedish producer" and it picked up speed when we toured with The Crown. Tomas (Lindberg) said to us "you ought to go record at Fredman, that's where everyone records" and we were like "yeah! But how, there's no way, this guy get millions of CD's from bands wanting to work with him, he's expensive, booked etc.". So Tomas tells us he'll talk to him (Fredrik Nordstrom) and he did and that was that! But it was cool to go there as an actual "band", you know, not having to send him CD's and bios and all that crap! We also got a lot of help, we've got our friends Elin and Helga, whom we only had a mutual friend between us, I mean we didn't even really know them. We emailed Elin and said we're coming to Sweden for 5 weeks, can we stay with you? She said yes, so we went there having never even met her before, but it was cool it worked out great. We became good friends and because of where she lived we had to walk one hour, each way to and from the studio! Which in some ways was hard, but who would complain because it was awesome I mean I have it on video too!

Ever have someone else in mind to produce?

We really liked the job Brian had done on our record but there was some personal stuff, he's a real good friend of mine but the band tends to clash with him, he wants to take control when we worked together, so it was just weird. But was something that would work better with a producer that you didn't know on a personal level. So when we were thinking about someone new, we had a lot of concerns as if they'd let us do things our way but everything disappeared when we met all those guys.

How was writing songs done this time around?

It's not just one person writing the song so it can be frustrating to write a bunch of stuff that you think goes together bring it to practice and everyone changes it around. So the way has been for both guitar players to go home and write two riffs that they like and then work on it like that. That's the way we'll work from now on.

Impious

Impious is a band I've been interested in for quite some time but never really got around to doing an interview with them, why? I have no idea. So when I bought their latest album* 'The Killer' *I just figured the time was right to show some support to this band. They've been releasing solid albums since their debut,* 'Evilized' *came out in 1998 and have found a new home with Hammerheart so hopefully they'll be able to grow even further. I emailed an interview to guitarist/founder Valle Adzic and I think it came out great!

Midwest Metal: I'd like to know a little about Impious. Before the "Evilized" LP, for instance, getting the band together what were the goals other than to create Metal? Had any of the original core members been in any other bands from your area?

Valle Adzic: Well, to be honest I don't think there was any other goal than to play metal. We didn't really know each other before starting the band, so the love and urge for playing metal was the force that brought us together. Back in '94 when Martin and I started the band we had been involved in some bands, but nothing really serious. I'd say **Impious** was my first real band.

How important was the ideology of the band when you formed? The name is strong in its defiant nature and lyric-wise, especially on "Evilized" the message was definitely intense ("Facing The Nails"!!!!) But as with a lot of bands (ie. Slayer) the earlier stuff is very Satanic and as time goes on the lyrics evolve, they remain strong but they ease up on the OTT stuff. What are your feelings on this?

I totally agree. I think it has to do with "growing up". This sounds horrible in a way, but I think it's true. The message is probably the same just that along the years you learn to express yourself in a different way. In a more mature way so to speak.

You recorded and released 2 demos before a record deal was signed. How did you get introduced to the underground, you know sending out demos, discovering fanzines etc. How would you describe the music on "Infernal Predomination" & "The Suffering"? How close to the current sound are these demos?

I was introduced to the underground in the beginning of the 90's by friends who were into trading/buying/selling demos and stuff. I kind of miss those days by the way. You know, before the internet took over. There was definitely something special in getting physical letters, tapes, flyers, etc...

The sound on 'Infernal Predomination' was both primitive and technical on the same time. In other words: We were a bunch of young kids, trying to play this complex death metal music, but couldn't really deliver. Some riffs were really great! One will even be recycled and end up on the next album. But I think our main problem in the early days was our incompetence and lack of routine to arrange songs. 'The Suffering' on the other hand was a quite big step forward. All the three songs ended up on 'Evilized', so I guess you know what they sound like!

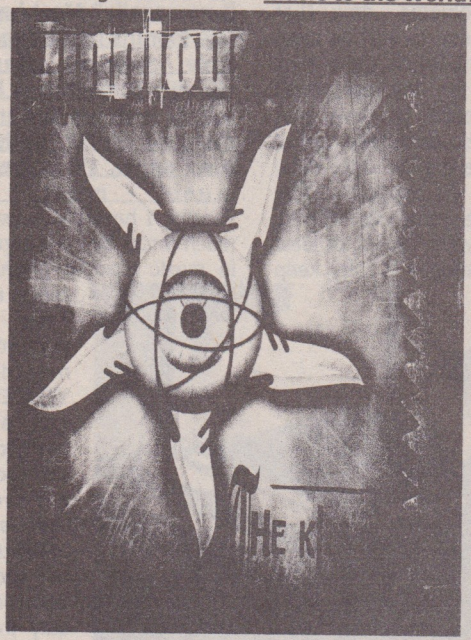
Were there any other offers at the time the deal with Black Sun was worked out? What were the pros and cons with signing with a "local" label?

At that time we didn't really have contact with any other label than Black Sun. They liked our second demo and wanted to hear some more songs before giving us a deal. So they paid for a third demo [which was never released by the way]. They liked the songs and we got the deal. When it comes to pros with signing to a local label I have to say it's really great to be able to "control" everything. I mean, instead of talking about important stuff (album cover, layout, etc) on the phone or via email, we would meet in person and talk about it over a cup of coffee. The cons would be that you get to know each

other "too well", so it gets harder to tell them "fuck off"!!

You released two albums while on the label, 'Evilized' and 'Terror Succeeds' also appearing on tributes to Metallica & Sepultura. Other than the recorded output, were you able to do any touring behind the albums?

Unfortunately we didn't get to tour at all during our time on Black Sun. That really sucked!! All we did was three shows in The Netherlands and Belgium with Sinister. But that's far from enough.



What was the hold up in getting 'Terror Succeeds' released? I know it was recorded in 2000 but didn't see the light of day until a very long time after? Also, the album was licensed to Century Media here in the US, did that help at all?

First it was the layout that took too fucking long to finish. Then Black Sun screwed up things with some distributors. I don't really remember what happened, but I recall it was a pain in the ass!! I have no idea what happened to the album in the US. No matter what, I am sure it turned out better than if Black Sun would have handled the release there as well.

You've worked with Tomas Skogsberg at Sunlight Studios as well as Los Angered Studios with Andy LaRocque. Yet the work you've done with Chris Silver keeps the band returning to him and Studio Mega. What's the reason? Also have many other bands worked with Chris @ Mega??

We just feel really comfortable in Studio Mega. Chris is a great producer and also a great friend! I have never ever met a producer with so much energy and dedication. I remember one day we had some problems in the studio and he stayed there until 4 o'clock in the morning, although he had to drive his children three hours later to the kindergarten. That's amazing! Other bands that have recorded at Studio Mega are Sundown, Beseech, Arise, Old Man's Child, Griffin, The Crown, among others.

Once gone from Black Sun, how long did it take to secure a new deal? What made Hammerheart the place to release new Impious music to the World?

We actually had one more album to release on Black Sun, but we asked if we could change label and they said yes. Hammerheart seemed to be the most natural step for us. We wanted to sign to a label that wasn't too small or too big.

Let's talk about "The Killer". I fucking love the album!! Did you guys do anything different as far as preparing for the album? And do you ever stop writing music?? [I recently interviewed your label/tourmates Necrophobic, Joakim said that changing labels sort of revitalized the band] does the same apply to Impious?

Hey, thanx man! We didn't really do anything different when it comes to preparing for the album. We just rehearsed a bit more this time. And no, I never stop writing music! I wouldn't stop even if my arm fell off!! I really have to agree with Joakim, my buddy pal! During our time at Black Sun we didn't feel too much of co-operation. Switching to Hammerheart was like a breath of fresh air.

Any different recording techniques used for 'The Killer'?

Yeah. We recorded all basic tracks at Studio Mega, then we took a break and recorded all vocals and solos at Studio Digizone (which is my own studio). Then we went back to Mega and mixed the whole thing. That's probably how we'll work on the next album as well.

What happened to [ex-Drummer] Ulf?

He went to an audition for a TV program called "Wannabe". It's like the program "Popstars" where they put together a pop band and show it on TV, just that "Wannabe" was about rock and not pop. Anyway, he got the part and after that we could see him on national TV every week. Sweet.

Your new Drummer Mikael, once he was in the band how long did it take to gel with him?

We knew Mikael before he joined the band, so there was no problem to get along.

I think 'The Deathsquad' EP is awesome, it gives a great overview of the band especially with the title track, the demo versions, the cover songs and the re-worked version of "Extreme Pestilence". I'm assuming the demos for "The Deathsquad" and "Dead Eyes Open" were a few of the demo songs Hammerheart heard when you were looking for a deal? All the covers are cool, the Motley Crue version is excellent-were they a big influence growing up?

Cool that you like it! Yeah, you're totally right, the demo versions of "The Deathsquad" and "Dead Eyes Open" were both on the demo/promo that Hammerheart got to hear before they signed us. Sure, Mötley Crüe played a big role when we grew up. We were really skeptical at first, and thought people would dislike the EP, especially the Mötley Crüe cover... but I guess we were wrong.

How was the Necrophobic tour for you guys?

Oh man! We had a fucking blast! We became great buddies with all the guys in the bands (Necrophobic and Satariel). Everybody were so friendly, no rockstar attitude. When it comes to the tour itself I think we did a pretty damn good job. Top reviews in all magazines!

Anything you'd like to add to this?

Thanx a lot for an interesting interview and for the support!! You're the first from the US to do an interview on this album. Spread the disease and stay metal!! Cheerz!

IMPIOUS

SELECT DISCOGRAPHY

Sepulchral Feast* [Inner Self] 97
Evilized* 1998
Metal Militia III* [One] 1998
Terror Succeeds* 2000
The Killer# 2003
The Deathsquad# [EP] 2003

*Released By Black Sun Records
Released by Hammerheart Records

www.impious.net

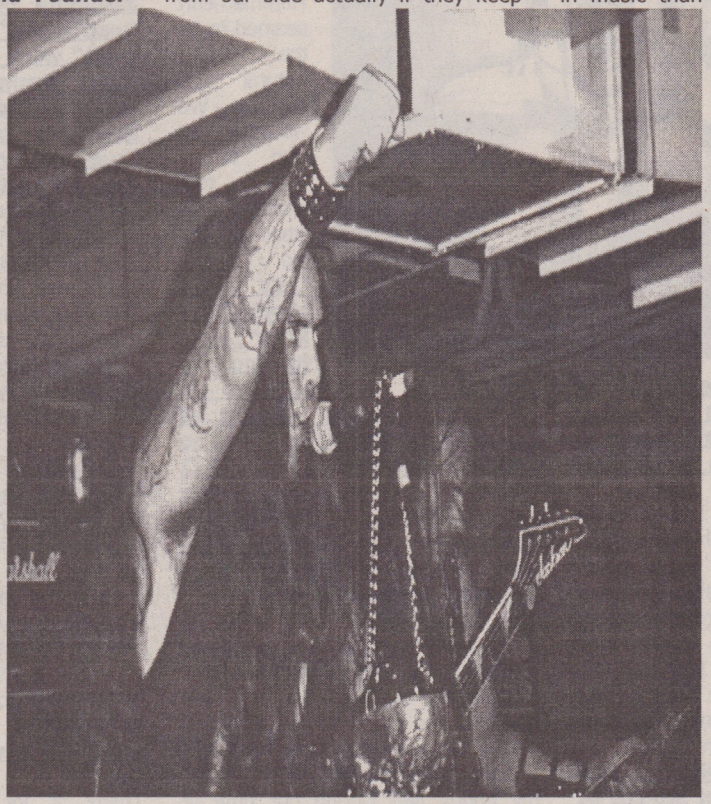
The Chasm

Chaos Reigns Supreme

At this point in the game, I'm just about out of ways to describe certain bands in this issue. My suggestion is don't bother reading this into, do yourself a favor and pick up* 'Conjuration Of The Spectral Empire' *the latest album by The Chasm, listen to it and the rest is up to you. Because whether you're for them or against them either way it really doesn't matter. They'll find a way to soldier on. This interview is with Guitarist/Vocalist and Founder Daniel Corchado. Enjoy.

Midwest Metal: First things first, how about an up to date report on what's going on in your world.

Daniel Corchado: Hail Tom...things are ok around here, the new album is getting very good response and also some good news are in the making, still they are not confirmed yet so I cannot really say a lot, but we'll post it in our site as soon as they become available. On the other hand there's also some not very good news in the front, after almost 3 years of being part of the 'Deathcult' Alfonso Polo has decided to leave the band, this is something that we really didn't expect, but so is life, and we have to carry on....we wish him the best in his future plans.



Most know of the situation with Witches Brew, have you run into any legal problems with getting 'Conjuration Of The Spectral Empire' released here in the US? Are there any differences between the Euro and US version?

Well, I gotta say that "signing" up with them has been our biggest mistake as a band so far. They totally ignored the album, they didn't accomplish any promotion at all so when we decided to release it here in USA by ourselves with the help of Utterly Somber, WB got really pissed and they started to talk shit about us over the internet. They have called us posers, backstabbers and bootleggers and they even tried to get us in immigration problems, now that sounds racist to me, as well as more personal and that is not right, they are playing with fire! We really don't worry or care about it, we have a lot of more serious issues to take care of and we know we did the right thing because they disrespected **The Chasm** and the music! But there's nothing legal to worry about, at least from our side actually if they keep talking shit about 'COTSE' and **The Chasm** they are the ones who are gonna get in big trouble (they probably never heard about ASCAP) believe me man, we are getting some serious legal backup here, but I will not talk about this any more as I don't want to show our weapons yet. In the end the right ones will be still standing strong, that means us and after all who are you gonna believe more, a band with 6 albums and a 10 year existence or in a "Pseudo" label who's been in business for probably 2 years and that really nobody knows! The only difference between the releases is that ours has some extra artwork.

"Conjuration..." has been out a few months now and everything I've read so far has been very positive. How do you feel about it personally? Most bands after a few months find things they wish they could've changed etc. My only complaint is I feel these songs perhaps deserve a little more as far as production. But then again, I'd rather have the music most of all

Exactly, I have always said that it is much better to have supreme quality in music than in production, as it seems not to be the case with the majority of bands nowadays. With 'COTSE' we worked with a very, very low budget, we had to record it by ourselves again and there's a lot of limitations when you record a Metal album on a PC, the only thing I regret about this CD is obviously the production it could've been bigger and much more powerful but in the end you can hear everything fine, riffs, bass, drums etc, so it didn't cause any major damage to the music. I've seen a lot of very strong reviews and opinions out there, and it really gives us more hope in this fight. I personally think this is our most accomplished work to date in every aspect and we are proud of what we've done as this Conjuration is something really special in **The Chasm** saga.

Before the writing process for the album, did you have anything in mind as far as structure goes? I think the album has a nice balance of classic The Chasm, but also a few new elements, such as the well executed epic "Procession To The Infraworld".

We always have worked first from the heart and then form the brain, if you know what I mean, yes, the classic The Chasm feel/style is all over the

album. That is something that we really feel strongly about that we have developed, created, and maintained a real personal style for the band. This time we worked as usual, writing and creating riffs/music that really filled our spirit but I gotta accept that we probably pushed ourselves a little bit more and the best example is the song that you mentioned, "Procession..." is very different from what we have done in the past. But the structure of the emotional atmosphere of the song has our trademark sound, this hymn of death has become one of my all time favorites, and I'm really glad that we decided to go for it and created it.

Did you ever have lyrics for the song and decided against using them?

Not really, every time I write something I use it, because is something that I strongly believe in that's why my lyrics something seems to be so fucked and make no sense but is the way they are. They come from my inner temple and I really understand 'em, but sometimes not everybody gets into them.

Along the same lines I think the atmospheric feel of the new album is your best yet, it gives a very dark/somber feel but at the same time an underlying triumphant feel? Any insights to this???

That is something I agree 100% and I'm very curious since a lot of people have told me the same thing you know, that this is our darkest sounding record, but at the same time the most "majestic". To put it simple in this matter I think that we did it more natural and at the same time more in purpose, I mean, we think that the essence of Real Death Metal or any Extreme Underground music is getting lost and weak out there. I really don't hear a lot of bands sounding really dark or probably "evil". Sometimes they try but is not real, is not pure because it's not from the heart and soul and it's something that I really miss in today's bands that's why we decided to give this more fucked up atmosphere to our music. This is real Heavy Metal of Death and this is a serious thing for us, a way of life and it's the way we feel and definitely it reflects in our music at least for us it does. We play what we believe in and it makes our spine chill and as long as we have passion for this band/music there's gonna be creativity and the future songs are gonna be even more devastating. We are not mellowing or trying to sound "modern", fuck that! We are getting more destructive!!!!

I was blown away by the video "Visions From The Spectral Attack", which was like a past, present and future of the band's accomplishments. It's got to be a good feeling to be able to offer the metal maniacs of the world something like that!

Well yes it is something very unique and part of our decision to include this video is that we were getting 10 years old as a band and we've never done something like this before. But also because the way things are looking in the 'scene' this days and specially in our case, it seems that opportunities to play live here are getting harder to get and now if we talk about Europe, well it really seems that we'll never be able to play there so the true followers of our cult everywhere at least have a small taste of how **The Chasm** live attack is. And since I finally had the equipment and knowledge to do it we were like "fuck it", let's do something different and special for us and for those who believe in us

I remember speaking to you, Daniel, about the 'Reaching The Veil Of Death' EP sales wise. How there were tons of reviews all for the most very part positive but where were the sales? So do you feel all the technology in Metal [Music in general] has hurt things like sales and impact? Are the current "false metal warriors" the ones who burn and don't buy cd's? Sales for "Reaching..." are still very slow and I really don't know the real reason behind this. As you mentioned the reviews and response in general have been very strong, so yes, there's probably people out there who are passing burned copies around and that's really fucked. If I really like a band I always try to get the original the only thing I burn on cd-r's are my vinyl's so they won't get worn out. Sometimes it really hurts when you are broke and stuff, knowing that you invested a lot of time and money in your release and is not getting very good response (sales-wise) but we are used to it and we never intended to make a living off the band that's why we have regular jobs. I think that for example, Witches Brew got so mad with us because they think that we released the CD here to make some extra quick cash and that is really stupid! We are selling the CD very cheap not like theirs, and all the cash we get is only used for promotion, mail, merchandise etc. Fuck, we are talking about only 1000 copies that is nothing if you see the worldwide Metal Population! Anyway yes, in my opinion people who only get burned cd-r's are not real supporters and I'm not only talking about **The Chasm** but of the whole underground scene, or what is left of it.

What are the future plans for the Deathcult? How are the individual spirits holding up and what is on the horizon?

As I mentioned the future looks good but still there's nothing in writing yet. One way or another our crusade is still strong and musically speaking we still have a lot to create we still believe in our band 100% we just hope that there will be some improvement in the status of the scene. But no matter what we will keep creating our metal of Death until we don't have the passion any more. We hope to release 1 or 2 vinyl releases this year and in 2004 unleash the new full length. Check **www.enterthedeathcult.com** for updates and info.

Anything to close this out???

Only that we really appreciate your support Tom! Hail to all the furious Chicago Headbangers who Support **The Chasm**...Utter Death!

www.enterthedeathcult.com

How It Ends

"Demons Wearing Angels Wings"

An assault delivered like few others is the way I describe 'So Shall It Be', the debut album by How It Ends on Thorp Records. Some of the most crushing rhythms around emanate from this disc each and every time I play it, it's a fucking monster of an album and a joy to listen to. Sounding like the bastard son of a Slayer/Hatebreed/All Out War one night stand, How It Ends could be one of the biggest names in aggression if given the right look. I spoke to their drummer Chris and here's how it went.

Midwest Metal: I was blown away by the fact that you're the drummer from Dysphoria...it's been a long time man.

Chris: Yeah, I remember you, I remember the mag and the reviews from a long time ago..

Well let's start with what happened to Dysphoria and how you started jamming with these guys.

Actually these guys and myself really spawned off of Dysphoria more than any type of separation, together we were pretty much created from the ashes of Dysphoria. What happened was one guitar player, Judd moved to go to school, then got a job that was like two hours away. So as we're looking for a guitar player our bass player was getting married and quit. So around this time the rest of us are having some writing issues with the old singer so we decided to part ways. It was Neil and I left and we found Ross (vox) and Kevin (gtr) and then Pat the bass player and we were going to stay together as Dysphoria. After a little while it just started to sound totally different having Kevin sing the old stuff, so we thought "why don't we just start over fresh".

I'm sure you're totally happy you did as this stuff deserves to stand on it's own.

Yeah, exactly, plus any bridges we burned in the past as Dysphoria we can just put behind us [laughing]! I'm just glad I was able to keep all my contacts from those years though.

Let's talk about the 2001 demo

Yeah, we did the three song demo at the end of 2001 and we were set to go in to finish mixing on September 11 of all days, so we'll never forget that session. So we did the three songs sent them out to a few labels and then got some interest and ended up going with Thorp. We ended up re-recording those three songs for the album too.

I really wish I'd gotten that demo back when, but in all reality I haven't kept up too much with any Metal or Metal Core stuff so in retrospect maybe it's good I didn't because

I got this album at a great time. How do you feel about Hardcore in 2003?

Yeah, even back when the original band got together in 1993 we never considered ourselves a Hardcore band, we just played heavy music we liked. The Hardcore crowd is just the first people we were able to attract but from day one we played Metal and Hardcore shows. We never bothered to try and fit into any one scene as we never wanted to limit ourselves, you can call us anything you want, we just say we're heavy.

Since you had a writing pattern from the earlier band, did the new guys add something that may have been missing in Dysphoria?

Definitely! We've never stopped writing songs. We're still working on songs now and the way we do it is by having everyone contribute, not one or two people. It's great to go through the process of everyone coming in with things and us morphing them into songs.

Where did the name How It Ends come from?

Actually that was one of the toughest things for the band, I mean there are just no more one word band names left! They've all been used [laughing] we didn't want to be like a typical hardcore band and have the three word band name, but we didn't have much of a choice. Neil our former guitar player, who left to join the Navy actually, came up with the name by reading through Ross' lyrics. So I went on the internet and searched high and low to see if I could find another band by the name of How It Ends and I couldn't.

God, technology huh?

Oh yeah, every name we'd come up and liked, I'd search the net and there'd they be.

What was the main thing you wanted to improve upon with How It Ends?

Well I wasn't really looking to necessarily improve on anything but I knew they would change, especially with everyone being able to contribute to songs so I guess I was looking forward to the change. I'd say the songs we write are a little less technical and these are straight forward where before we'd always be looking for more parts, I think we can get away with four versus seven!

Ok, if someone had to listen to one song off the record to get an idea of what you're all about, what song would you play for them?

I really like the first song on the album "Empty Nothing Forever". I don't think it came out as goon on the recording as we'd hoped it to, but I still think it's one of our strongest songs.

www.howitends.net

Solace

Lucky 13?

The background on New Jersey's Solace is pretty interesting, but no where near as exciting as the music they create. All you really need to know is they were there, now they're here and they bring with them some of the coolest (Doom, Stoner, Cosmic, Space) Rock known to man. I spoke to Guitarist and Founder Tommy Southard about the new album and what's been happening since we last heard from these guys a few years ago. If you've never heard of these guys and you're interested I highly suggest checking them out as they create some of the best, well rounded out rock around!

Midwest Metal: How's everything going today man? Did you have to work today or what?

Tommy Southard: Yeah I worked today and right after work I had to come here to my mother's house to bury the family cat, the cat we'd had for like nineteen years!

Aw, that sucks...

Yeah, that's my post work fun, digging a hole in the backyard. I had that hovering over my head all day, plus the weather's really shitty so it's kind of fitting.

Well on to better stuff, I have to say '13' is fucking killer, totally worth the wait!

Thank you much, man.

A lot of people, myself included, were wondering why it took so long to follow up 'Further' (2000)?

Well it was just down to bad timing because 'Further' came out just as I was having my first son and that pretty much took up a lot of my time, I mean just as we were finishing up the record he was born. And not too long after my second son was born. So I have two young boys, work and everything that goes along with that, I mean it's not that easy to be the rock n roll guy you once were! So my priorities have changed a bit, before everything was geared more towards the band and soon as these things happen it's like a 360 turn around. Don't get me wrong, as much as I love my music and my band my children do come first. So these were big turns of events in my life and I've pretty much lived a life centered around Rock N Roll, being able to uproot at any minute, you know go play out of state shows just for beer money or whatever. So certain things will take a back seat these days and other than those things we've had some personal thing happen in the band, losing drummers and trying to find new ones and it's been a bit of a struggle. But through everything, music to me is just something I love too much to just put aside, I have to do both because if I wasn't playing music I feel a part of me would die and I can't have that!

With everything I read when 'Further' was released, I mean I don't think I read a bad review of the album, was there ever any pressure to follow it up?

Nah, I mean I was really overjoyed at the way 'Further' was received, I was just really into the fact that people got and liked what we did, I'm still very proud of that record! So I wouldn't say there was any pressure it was just like, "let's try and make another great record". The only thing that ever concerned me was it had been so long since 'Further' was released and I was hoping people would still remember us as a lot can happen over a few years, a lot of different bands come out and a lot of things change in the scene. I didn't want people thinking this was our first record or something like that, we just do what we do and it's been great so far, very positive. Sure it took a little longer than we anticipated to get '13' out, but it was a labor of love and totally worth it.

In the time between then and now it seems as if the scene has just exploded, how do you keep in touch with the scene?

Well I try to read as many magazines as I can but those are few and far between, you'll get some stuff on the bigger bands like Electric Wizard or bands like that but for me I have to say the internet has been the perfect tool. I know a lot of people want to shun it, saying it's not viable but come on! Go to Stonerrock.com or Roadburn.com log on once or twice per week and get info on every fucking band in the world, show dates, records coming out and it's just mind blowing. When we first started **Solace** back in late 1997 early 1998 I was completely computer illiterate, my bass player still is, he doesn't even have a computer. But after a short period of time I was able to get through it and just build this little network of people from getting interest in the band to tape trading.

Over the extended period of time were you always writing or did you constantly re-write parts?

Well we're always writing in fact we have the whole next record already written. So while from the outside things may have looked really quiet internally we were constantly writing. Rob (Bass) and I are always jamming and getting songs together and when it comes time to record we just pick some of our favorites as well as ones

the drummer knew. A lot of people don't know this but the drummer who played on the record, well we only practiced with him about six to eight times before we recorded. So some songs we had written we couldn't record because he didn't know them, so they'll end up on the next record.

What kind of rehearsal schedule do you guys have?

That's another thing that slowed us down a little bit as we lost our free practice room. Our drummer shared a house with a few other guys and we jammed in the basement and it was great, all soundproofed ya know? So something happened where the main guy lost the house and we lost our free spot. At the time we were jamming a couple times per week whereas now we have to pay for a spot and it's down to about once per week.

Man, the more and more I ask this same question of bands there's always a shortage of places for bands to jam at, I mean they're out there but some are just way too much money.

Yeah when you have a place to play and it's free and all of a sudden it's taken away from you, that coupled with your other financial obligations it's fucking tough man.

Along the same lines I wanted to ask this of you. Having spent time in a band on a major label, what did you pick up on as far as business survival, if you will?

I'll be straight up and honest man, I'm not a business guy. I know a lot of people are, but I'm in this business, if you really want to call it that, and I don't. But I'm this game because I love it! I don't care if there's five or five thousand people did what I do it's an honor, if I make a few dollars, then that's fine man. I've made a couple dollars here and there over the years and I've also paid a lot of money out, so to me there's not a lot of difference from doing something on a major or being with a smaller independent. Most people don't see both sides of it, on a major sure, maybe they'll throw out some money at first and you get an advance, get you some gear and get thrown on a tour bus. But in the end all that shit comes out of your pay so what are you gaining? So during all my years I've kind of just gone with the flow and things have thankfully worked out, but I've done nothing different no matter what, I just play my music. I know maybe sometimes I should pay more attention to the business but man, I got into Rock N Roll as an escape, it was an escape from my mundane life and my problems. So I want to keep it like that, keep the purity of it away from the bullshit!

Let's talk about the new album, starting with the title, where does '13' come from?

We definitely choose it for a reason partially to convey some of the bad luck, so to speak, we've gone through. All the trials and tribulations we went through to make the record more like a symbolic kind of title. In the end it does work, it fits with the artwork and it ends up working because there's thirteen songs on it.

Is it all new material, besides "Shit Kisser" which was a demo track?

Actually track two "Indolence" was the very first song the band ever wrote, it was written back in the infancy of the band. Originally it was recorded and released on a local compilation which was very limited. So in getting songs together for the album we thought it was a good song and it was cool to rerecord and do it proper. "Shit Kisser" is also from the past, no ones really ever heard it so that was cool to get out and about.

I read somewhere that there will be some vinyl bonus tracks.

We did a 7" before 'Further' came out and we're going to re-release those tracks, I'm not even sure how many of the 7" were pressed but I know it was pretty small. So we'll add those to the album as there were a lot of people who never got a hold of it.

You have a special guest on the album, how did Wino come to play and add his touch to this album? I mean his voice just sounds so natural on "Common Cause"!

I started playing this riff one day at practice and it totally reminded me of 'The Church Within' era Obsessed. So through having played with Spirit Caravan when they'd come through Jersey and at S.H.o.D. and through various friends we sent Wino a tape. Told him we were huge fans of his and we have this song and asked him if he'd be into singing on it and through a fairly long period of time it all worked out. He was free when we were doing the record and he came out and put his time and effort into it, which is amazing and we owe him a great debt. It's awesome he was able to do this for us, whatever I could ever do for him to repay the favor, whatever.

Did you send him both songs in advance or what?

No, the other song, what happened was we were in the studio and we were like "dude, you're here" and I didn't want him to leave (laughing) so I asked him if he'd be into playing some guitar on another song.

What have been some of the highlights of your career?

Well to me just the fact that I'm still here and making records is pretty cool. There's so many musicians in the world, so many people playing guitar in bands and me being able to do this is everything. I mean I've played in bands that have opened for Black Sabbath, had Bruce Dickinson sing on our track for the 'Nativity In Black' thing to just recently jamming with Wino but overall being able to play music I create with my friends. Then to be able to get it out to people and have them comment on it, that blows me away.

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SOILWORK

figure number five

the new album

figure number five

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